

**HEIDEGGER ON BEING
SELF-CONCEALING**

Katherine Withy



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Abbreviations

All works are by Martin Heidegger. Full bibliographical information is given in the bibliography.

Abbreviations of English translations

A	'Anaximander's Saying'
C	<i>Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)</i>
BQP	<i>Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected 'Problems' of 'Logic'</i>
BPP	<i>The Basic Problems of Phenomenology</i>
BWP	<i>The Beginning of Western Philosophy: Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides</i>
EGT	<i>Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy</i>
ET	<i>The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus</i>
FCM	<i>The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude</i>
FS	<i>Four Seminars</i>
H	<i>Heraclitus: The Inception of Occidental Thinking; Logic: Heraclitus's Doctrine of the Logos</i>
HI	<i>Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'</i>
IM	<i>Introduction to Metaphysics</i>
L	<i>Logic: The Question of Truth</i>
MFL	<i>The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic</i>
NII	<i>Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same</i>
NIV	<i>Nietzsche, Volume IV: Nihilism</i>
OECF	'On the Essence and Concept of <i>Phusis</i> in Aristotle's <i>Physics</i> B, 1'
OEG	'On the Essence of Ground'
OET	'On the Essence of Truth'
OWA	'The Origin of the Work of Art'
P	<i>Parmenides</i>
PR	<i>The Principle of Reason</i>
SZ	<i>Being and Time</i>
TB	'Time and Being'
WM	'What is Metaphysics?'
TT	'The Thing'

Volumes of the Gesamtausgabe

GA5	<i>Holzwege</i>
GA6.1	<i>Nietzsche: Erster Band</i>
GA6.2	<i>Nietzsche: Zweiter Band</i>
GA7	<i>Vorträge und Aufsätze</i>
GA9	<i>Wegmarken</i>
GA10	<i>Der Satz vom Grund</i>
GA12	<i>Unterwegs zur Sprache</i>
GA15	<i>Seminare</i>
GA21	<i>Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit</i>
GA24	<i>Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie</i>
GA26	<i>Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz</i>
GA29/30	<i>Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit</i>
GA34	<i>Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet</i>
GA35	<i>Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie, Auslegung des Anaximander und Parmenides</i>
GA40	<i>Einführung in die Metaphysik</i>
GA45	<i>Grundfragen der Philosophie: Ausgewählte »Probleme« der »Logik«</i>
GA53	<i>Hölderlins Hymne »Der Ister«</i>
GA54	<i>Parmenides</i>
GA55	<i>Heraklit. 1. Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens 2. Logik. Heraklits Lehre vom Logos</i>
GA65	<i>Beiträge zur Philosophie (vom Ereignis)</i>

Epigraph

How wilt thou see red and green and russet, unless before (seeing) these three (colours) thou see the light?

But since thy mind was lost (absorbed) in (perception of) the colour, those colours became to thee a veil from (debarred thee from contemplating) the light.

Inasmuch as at night those colours were hidden, thou sawest that thy vision of the colour was (derived) from the light.

There is no vision of colour without the external light: even so it is with the colour of inward phantasy.

[...]

At night there was no light: thou didst not see the colour; then it (the light) was made manifest by the opposite of light (by darkness).

(First) comes the seeing of light, then the seeing of colour; and this thou knowest immediately by the opposite of light (darkness).

[...]

Hidden things, then, are manifested by means of their opposite; since God hath no opposite, He is hidden[.]¹

¹ Jalálu'ddín Rúmí, *The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí*, Volume II, Book I, lines 1121-1124, 1128-1129, 1131.

Introduction

1. Approaching Being as Self-Concealing

Martin Heidegger's philosophical project, both early and late, is to ask some version of the question, 'What's up with being?'. This question might be asking for any of a number of things: is there some single account of what it takes to be an entity at all, of any sort—and if so, what is it?; in terms of what horizon do we have access to this unified phenomenon of being?; what feature of us accounts for the fact that we can access that?; if that unified phenomenon of being changes over time, what drives that change?; and more. Exactly what Heidegger is asking in his interrogation of being appears to shift as his thought develops and he comes to new preoccupations and insights. One of these insights, however, does not merely shift the sense of the question of being but suggests why being might be question-worthy in the first place. It also indicates why asking 'What's up with being?' might run into special difficulty. This is the insight that being is self-concealing.

That being is self-concealing is an insight most associated with Heidegger's middle and later periods. It is plausibly introduced in 'On the Essence of Truth' (1930), where Heidegger discusses concealment, untruth, and the mystery (OET: 148/GA9: 193-194).¹ It is

¹ References to Heidegger's texts, other than *Being and Time*, are either given in full in a footnote or given in the body of the text with an abbreviated title of the English translation and a page number, followed by the *Gesamtausgabe* volume and page number. All page references to *Being and Time* are to the marginal pagination in the English translation, which reflects the pagination of the eighth German edition of *Sein und Zeit*. In quoting from translations of Heidegger's texts, I replace 'beings' with 'entities' for '*das Seiende*', 'Being' with 'being' for '*das Sein*' and '*das Seyn*', 'anxiety' with 'angst' for '*die Angst*', 'potentiality-for-being' with 'ability-to-be' for '*Seinkönnen*', and 'man' with 'the human being' for '*der Mensch*' (replacing masculine pronouns with neutral pronouns accordingly). I transliterate all Greek.

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plausibly anticipated in ‘What is Metaphysics?’ (1929) with the claim that ‘being itself is essentially finite’ (WM: 95/GA9: 120). The insight receives its most sustained treatment when Heidegger discusses Heraclitus’s claim that *phusis* (i.e., being) loves to hide in his lecture course, ‘The Inception of Occidental Thinking: Heraclitus’ (1943). Throughout Heidegger’s later work, the self-concealing of being is a central and recurring theme, associated with other significant phenomena, such as *lēthē* or forgottenness, the forgetting of the ontological difference, and the ungroundedness of being.

But some phenomenon of self-concealing is present even in *Being and Time* (1927). That text begins with the necessity of raising the question of being, which has been concealed in forgottenness (SZ: 1). Awakening the question of being means coming to experience being as question-worthy, and being is question-worthy precisely because it is both given to and withheld from us. This dynamic of giving and withholding is what makes ontology necessarily phenomenological. Phenomenology allows that which shows itself, from itself (as a *phainomenon*) to be seen (SZ: 31). Being is the primary object of phenomenology—the phenomenon in the phenomenological sense (SZ: 31, 35)—because, while it shows itself, being also needs something that ‘lets it be seen’ (*legein*) (SZ: 32). It needs to be allowed to show itself because of its own absencing or self-concealing—and, equally, it needs to be allowed to show itself *in* its distinctive self-concealing.

Of course, the concealing of being at stake in *Being and Time* need not be the same as, or even related to, the concealing at stake in Heidegger’s later work. In particular, the one may be contingent while the other is necessary and perhaps even essential to being. There may even be multiple phenomena of concealing and concealment in both the early and the later works—and indeed, there are. There are so many different phenomena of concealing and concealment in Heidegger’s corpus that it is difficult to determine how they are all distinguished—and perhaps even related—and which of them he names when he speaks of the self-concealing of being.

Determining what Heidegger means by ‘the self-concealing of being’ is my task in this book. I interpret a range of Heidegger’s texts from over the course of his career, but my goal is not to give a history of the idea of being’s self-concealing in Heidegger’s thought—why he introduces it and when, how and why his treatment of it changes or develops over time. My goal is more modest and preliminary: to identify what phenomenon, or phenomena, Heidegger is most plausibly talking about. I do this by surveying various candidates for the self-concealing of being and eliminating what is not a *self*-concealing and what is not a concealing of *being*. What remains should be the self-concealing of being. My method is accordingly less narrative than is usual in philosophical monographs and more taxonomical: I sort the various things that Heidegger says about concealing and concealment, cataloguing, and categorising them.² Having distinguished the self-concealing of being from other related phenomena, I conclude by assessing what this phenomenon means for the project of asking, ‘What’s up with being?’

This book is indebted to Joan Stambaugh’s 1992 work, *The Finitude of Being*, in ways that are not obvious—particularly given that *The Finitude of Being* appears only once in the notes.³ First, Stambaugh raises the question of the sense in which, for Heidegger, being is finite, and she pursues that question by drawing distinctions between various types of concealment. My project is an heir to Stambaugh’s, and it was inspired in part by my own dissatisfaction with her answers to the question. Second, Stambaugh’s extensive references to the relevant Heideggerian texts that were available at the time she was writing were an invaluable resource and starting

² Heidegger might be taken to reject my classificatory approach as too calculative. He says in particular with regard to concealment: ‘It would [...] be an error to claim that the rich essence of concealedness [*Verborgenheit*] could be gained just by counting the sundry modes of concealment [*Verbergung*], under the guidance of the various “word meanings”. If we speak of “kinds” of concealment [*Verbergung*] we do not mean that there would be a genus, “concealment [*Verbergung*] in general”, to which then, following the schema of the usual logical classification, various species and their sub-species and variations would be subordinated’ (P: 64/GA54: 94). But if Heidegger’s general point is that ‘the connection among the kinds of concealedness [*Verborgenheit*] is a historical one’ (P: 64/GA54: 94) rather than a lexical one, then in order to work out that history we must first distinguish among the kinds of concealedness phenomenologically, which is precisely what I undertake to do here.

³ Joan Stambaugh, *The Finitude of Being*.

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point for my own research. Third, and finally, despite my intention and all my best efforts to write a standard, chapter-based book, this text has insisted on being structured in a way that resembles the structure of Stambaugh's own book: as a series of brief topical engagements.⁴ I have yet to fully understand why the material wants to be addressed in this way, but that it does, I am sure.

Because one must start somewhere, I proceed on the basis of several commitments and assumptions. First, I see a robust continuity in Heidegger's thought from early to late, notwithstanding the obvious changes and differences over time. I draw freely from texts from all periods of his thinking. It seems to me that this interpretive commitment is better able to help to illuminate what genuine changes there are in Heidegger's thought than is an initial commitment to a radical discontinuity, which sets itself the task of building bridges after having dug a ravine. Better, I think, to assume that the path continues uninterrupted until one encounters an interruption.

As a result of this commitment, and second, I do not think that being 'is' independently of Dasein. Some readers take this to be the major change from Heidegger's *Being and Time*-era to his middle and later period: Heidegger realises that *Being and Time* was too Dasein-centric and that being needs to be thought independently of Dasein.⁵ But, while middle and later Heidegger does indeed pursue a less Dasein-centric approach to thinking being, he never thinks being as independent of Dasein.⁶ The two are intimately linked and

⁴ The brevity of some sections of this book will no doubt disappoint readers looking for extended treatment of a favourite topic. All I can say is that I have kept my eye on the prize of identifying the phenomenon called 'the self-concealing of being'.

⁵ Notably, Richard Capobianco (see, for example, *Heidegger's Way of Being*) and William J. Richardson, S.J., *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*. Heidegger does sometimes encourage us to read his work in this way. See, for example, Heidegger, 'Preface', in Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*.

⁶ Heidegger does say things such as the following: 'The thinking attempted in *Being and Time* is "under way" toward bringing our thinking onto a way through which it may enter the relation of the truth of being to the essence of the human being, toward opening up a path for thinking on which it may explicitly ponder being itself in its truth' ('Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?"', 282). This says that the goal is to think being itself and that thinking the relationship between being and the human being is merely a step towards this goal. But notice that Heidegger then goes on to assert that 'the relation of being to the human essence belongs to being itself' ('Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?"', 282), which means that thinking 'being itself' always involves thinking its relationship with the human being. To be sure, the 'truth of being does not exhaust itself in Dasein' ('Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?"', 283),

inter-defined: being always needs Dasein and cannot 'take place' without it, and Dasein cannot 'take place' without being (and its self-concealing).⁷ I would not know how to make sense of being—'that on the basis of which entities are already understood' (SZ: 6)—wholly independently of the entity that understands being. I have no objection to readers who are interested in making sense of such a thing and who see in Heidegger's work resources for doing so. I read their work and I learn a lot from it. But I do not read Heidegger in the same way.

Third, and hopefully least controversially, I assume that Heidegger can be wrong—that he can mis-state his own points, misuse his own terminology, confuse things that should be kept distinct, and make all the mistakes that all philosophers make sometimes. Heidegger certainly erred politically; there is no reason to think that he did not sometimes err philosophically and rhetorically, too. Of course, attributing an error is always a last resort. But when I see no other option, I try to charitably and respectfully note the error and correct it. As we will see, much of what drives my argument in this book is my attempt to understand and correct what I take to be a rather substantial error on Heidegger's part. I assure the reader that I did the utmost to exhaust all other options first.

Fourth, and finally, I assume that it is phenomenologically legitimate to attempt to illuminate the self-concealing of being. Of course, the goal is to bring being to light *as* self-concealing and not to destroy or undermine that self-concealing. Calling self-concealing '*kruptesthai*' and being '*phusis*', Heidegger says that 'the *kruptesthai* of *phusis* is not to be overcome, not to be stripped from *phusis*. Rather, the task is the much more difficult one of allowing *phusis*, in all the purity of

but saying that being 'is' not independently of Dasein is not obviously inconsistent with claiming that it is not 'exhausted in' Dasein. The latter does, however, require interpretation.

⁷ E.g., 'the clearing of entities is this supporting ground [of our humanity] only insofar as it is the clearing for the vacillating self-concealment [*Sichverbergen*], for the entrance of being itself into what is lighted up. On the other hand, [...] if the human being would not be, then neither could this clearing come to pass. The clearing for the self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*]*—truth—is the supporting ground of humanity, and humanity comes to pass only by grounding and being exposed to the supporting ground as such. While the human being stands as an entity in the openness of entities, it must also at the same time stand in a relation to what is self-concealing [*Sichverbergenden*]. The ground of humanity must therefore be grounded through humanity as ground'* (BQP: 179/GA45: 212).

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its essence, the *kruptesthai* that belongs to it' (OECF: 230/GA9: 301). If being is a sort of concealed illuminating—an 'inconspicuous shining [*unscheinbare[s] Scheinen*]' (H: 109/GA55: 144)—then part of investigating being is allowing being its inconspicuousness while clarifying how it is both inconspicuous and shining. The goal is to bring being to light *as* self-concealing.

Still, the self-concealing of being is a phenomenon that brings a certain darkness to our thinking: '[b]ecause the to-be-thought is in its essence the self-concealing [*das Sichverbergen*], and thus the "obscure" [*das Dunkle*] in this sense, in this way and only in this way is essential thinking, which remains in agreement with what is experienced as "obscure", itself necessarily obscure [*dunkel*]' (H: 26/GA55: 32). According to Heidegger, this is why Heraclitus, who also held that being is self-concealing (see §3), was known as 'The Obscure' (H: 26/GA55: 32). But note that the obscurity of essential thinking is limited to that which it inherits from its subject matter. '[I]n this way and *only* in this way' (H: 26/GA55: 32) should our thinking of the self-concealing of being be obscure. Otherwise, it should be clear.

Putting the same point more poetically, Heidegger says that we

must learn to recognise the dark as the ineluctable and to keep at a distance those prejudices which destroy the lofty sway of the dark. The dark has nothing to do with pitch blackness as the complete, sheer absence of light. The dark is rather the secret mystery of what is light. The dark keeps what is light in its presence; what is light belongs to it. The dark therefore has its own clearness and purity. [...] It is hard to keep the dark pure and clear, to preserve it from admixture with a brightness that does not belong to it and to find the only brightness that does.⁸

Some readers might think that we keep the dark 'pure and clear' by leaving it unilluminated and so surrendering the project of thinking being as self-concealing. But Heidegger's injunction is to avoid trying to illuminate being's self-concealing with an improper

⁸ Heidegger, 'Principles of Thinking', in *The Piety of Thinking*, 56.

brightness. He allows that there is a proper brightness: a way of making sense of being and its self-concealing. That is what I pursue here. I attempt to shed the proper brightness on the self-concealing of being.

2. The Taxonomy

There are multiple phenomena of concealing and concealment in Heidegger's thought, and there are so in part because there are multiple phenomena of *unconcealing*. Any phenomenon of *unconcealing* entails a correlate phenomenon of concealment. To distinguish various phenomena of concealing and concealment, then, one good place to start is by distinguishing the different types of *unconcealing*. Unconcealing is one of Heidegger's words for being, and there are two primary ways in which *to be* is *to be unconcealed*.

First, to be an entity is to be unconcealed or to show up as *there* rather than not and as *this* rather than that. To be a pair of scissors, for example, is to show up as *available to use* (rather than not) and as *for cutting* (*certain sorts of things in certain sorts of ways*) (rather than as for something else). Paradigmatically, a pair of scissors shows up in this way when I pick it up and start cutting something with it. Using items of equipment uncovers those items of equipment in their being there as what they are. More broadly, any type of comporting towards entities uncovers them as that and what they are. Comporting uncovers entities in their that-being (or, existing) and their what-being (or, essence). Heidegger calls this 'discovering'. To be an entity is to be so discovered or unconcealed by us.

But we do not only uncover particular entities one at a time. We are open to entities as such and as a whole—to everything that is for us, and to the very fact that all those things are. This more global uncovering of entities in their being is the showing up of entities as a whole and as such. This is also a phenomenon of being—not the being of a particular entity, such as a pair of scissors, but being as such. Our openness to being as such is a version of what might have traditionally been discussed under the heading of 'consciousness', in contrast to our openness in intentional acts in which we discover

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(*entdecken*) particular entities. Entities as a whole and as such are uncovered or unconcealed when we disclose (*erschliessen*) them. This disclosing produces a disclosedness: a *there* or a clearing within which particular entities can show up in discovering, just as a stage allows a play to take place, illumination lights up a room of objects, or a clearing in a forest allows a gathering.

Notice that the unconcealing of entities as such and as a whole is the condition of possibility for the unconcealing of any particular entity as that and what it is. An entity can show up as a pair of scissors only because everything that is, and what it is to be at all, have already shown up. As we will see in §11, this is because the showing up of entities as such and as a whole is the worlding of the world, and it is only on the basis of the world that particular entities can be uncovered as the entities that they are. For now, let me put the point more schematically: in order to grasp some entity in its that-being and what-being, one must have already grasped what it is to be at all, rather than not, and one must already have some sense for what kinds of entities there can be. Thus the former depends on the latter, and the latter can be said to ground the former.

Mark Wrathall notices this grounding relationship and he builds on it to distinguish four different ‘planks’ or ‘levels’ of unconcealing—‘planks in Heidegger’s platform for thinking about’ unconcealing.⁹ Strictly, Wrathall’s planks are not planks of unconcealing but planks of the unconcealment produced by the relevant phenomena of unconcealing. I have already discussed the discoveredness of entities in their that-being and what-being, which Wrathall locates at the second plank, as well as the disclosedness of the being of entities as such and as a whole, which Wrathall locates at the third plank. To these two phenomena of unconcealment, Wrathall adds the unconcealment produced when we speak of an entity (first plank) and the purported unconcealment that makes possible the disclosing of being as such, which he calls ‘the clearing’ (fourth plank). This gives us four planks of unconcealment (see Table 2.1).

⁹ Wrathall, ‘Unconcealment’, in his *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History*, 15. For a more direct engagement with Wrathall’s account, see my ‘Concealing and Concealment in Heidegger’.

Table 2.1 Wrathall's four planks of unconcealment

Plank	Unconcealment
One	Linguistic communication
Two	Discoveredness
Three	Disclosedness
Four	The clearing

Wrathall's planks are not uncontroversial. In particular, his account of how second-plank unconcealment makes possible first-plank unconcealment is disputed, and I will offer an alternative to it in §9. Further, in §18 I will strike out Wrathall's fourth plank, claiming that nothing further makes third-plank unconcealment possible in the way that a fourth plank would. Nonetheless, Wrathall's planks are a useful starting point for my taxonomical project. They clearly distinguish different types or 'levels' of unconcealment—which I will turn into levels of *unconcealing*. The sharp distinction between the second and third planks is particularly important to maintain given the complicated relationship between discovering particular entities in their being (second plank) and disclosing the being of entities as such and as a whole (third plank). Further, the plank structure will force me to interrogate the relationships between each of the levels by asking how one makes the other possible, or how the other is grounded in the one (see §18). Finally, visualising Wrathall's plank metaphor in a table sets me up with a certain set of rows and columns to which I can add further columns. I now turn to that—and so to setting up the basic structure of my taxonomy. Indeed, the first column to add brings us straight to a phenomenon of concealment.

As I noted, any *unconcealing* or *unconcealment* makes essential reference to a concealment that it presupposes and overcomes. Concealment 'belongs *essentially* to unhiddenness [*Unverborgenheit*], like the valley belongs to the mountains' (ET: 66/GA34: 90). Wrathall explains: 'Unconcealment is meant to be understood like blindness or reticence. [...] With respect to each plank in the platform, then, concealment is the positive term, and needs to be understood before we can become clear about what unconcealment amounts

to'.¹⁰ Wrathall here posits concealment as conceptually prior to unconcealment, in the sense that understanding it is necessary for understanding unconcealment. This is so because concealment also has what Aristotle would call a 'priority in definition': concealment belongs to the definition of unconcealment while unconcealment does not belong to the definition of concealment. But concealment is also ontologically prior to unconcealment, in the sense that unconcealment cannot be what it is without concealment, while concealment can be without unconcealment. This is so because unconcealment is a privative phenomenon and privative phenomena, such as absences and lacks, essentially presuppose their positive counterparts.

Heidegger certainly takes unconcealment to be a privative phenomenon. He identifies it with the ancient Greek '*alētheia*', which ordinarily means 'truth' but is much more interesting morphologically.¹¹ '*Alētheia*' combines the alpha-privative (*a-*) with '*lēthē*'. '*Lēthē*' means forgetting or forgetfulness, and it is most commonly known as the name of the river of oblivion in Hades. The corresponding verb, '*lanthanein*', means 'to escape or elude notice, to be unseen, unnoticed'.¹² To overcome this *lēthē* is to come to be un-forgotten, or unconcealed. In Greek, this would be *alētheuein*, unconcealing, where the un- and the alpha privative (*a-*) mark the surmounting of concealment (*lēthē*). Surmounting concealment produces an un-concealment (*Unverborgenheit*), *a-lētheia*. *Alētheia*, then, is literally the condition of no longer eluding notice: no longer being forgotten or concealed. It is unconcealment or unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*)—or, understood as a process, unconcealing (*unverbergen*).

Unconcealment or truth overcomes or negates the prior concealment, *lēthē*, in an act of unconcealing. In this unconcealing,

¹⁰ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 18. Heidegger expresses this using the language of truth, in this way: 'truth is denial (negative), un-truth is affirmation (positive)' (ET: 95/GA34: 131).

¹¹ Heidegger frequently uses the vocabulary of truth (*Wahrheit*) to talk about unconcealing. However, since he is not primarily interested in what we ordinarily call truth but rather in what makes it possible, this vocabulary is confusing and misleading—as Heidegger eventually came to realise (see Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 11–12). For this reason, I will generally avoid talk of truth.

¹² LSJ, s.v. 'λανθάνω'.

‘something like a suspension or cancellation of concealedness [*Verborgenheit*]’ occurs (P: 14/GA54: 20). Heidegger thinks this suspension or cancellation as a conflict or struggle. In such *polemos*, ‘[u]nconcealedness [*Unverborgenheit*] is wrested from concealment [*Verborgenheit*], in a conflict with it’ (P: 17/GA 54: 25). So, to understand phenomena of unconcealment and concealment, we need to identify at each plank an unconcealment (*alētheia*), a prior concealment (*lēthē*), and the polemic suspension of the latter in an act of unconcealing (*alētheuein*) (see Table 2.2).

However, not all the phenomena that Wrathall identifies and that Heidegger discusses under the rubric of ‘concealment’ are prior to an unconcealment and polemically suspended in an unconcealing. Consider this claim: ‘Being [*Seyn*] is not merely hidden [*verborgen*]; it withdraws [*entzieht sich*] and conceals itself [*verbirgt sich*]. From this we derive an essential insight: the clearing, in which entities are, is not simply bounded and delimited by something hidden [*Verborgenes*] but by something *self-concealing* [*Sichverbergendes*]’ (BQP: 178/GA45: 210, Heidegger’s italics). Or again: being ‘shows itself [*zeigt sich*] and withdraws [*entzieht sich*] at the same time’ (BQP: 178/GA45: 210; cf. BQP: 180/GA45: 213). Wrathall interprets this as the claim that ‘the style of being that allows things to show up as having an essence is most invisible when it is most effective.’¹³ I will offer a different interpretation of this passage in §24. What any interpretation should recognise is that this self-concealing that being undertakes ‘at the same time’ as its self-showing is not necessarily the same as the concealment that is conceptually and ontologically presupposed by the privative phenomenon of unconcealing.

Table 2.2 Concealment (*lēthē*), unconcealing, and unconcealment

Plank	Concealment (<i>lēthē</i>)	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Unconcealment (<i>alētheia</i>)
One			Linguistic communication
Two			Discoveredness
Three			Disclosedness
Four			The clearing

¹³ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 33.

Although *lēthē* need not be temporally prior to unconcealing (see §4 and §12), a temporal metaphor is helpful to make this point. Daniel O. Dahlstrom notes that being ‘is at once (diachronically) the emergence from hiddenness and (synchronically) the differentiation and interplay of unhiddenness and hiddenness.’¹⁴ My claim is that the hiddenness from which being ‘diachronically’ emerges (concealment) must in principle be distinguished from that hiding with which it plays ‘synchronically’ (concealing). Put crudely: the hiddenness that comes ‘before’ un-concealing must be distinguished from that which happens ‘at the same time’ as it. These two phenomena of hiding are differently related to being, and since that is all that we know about them at this point, we must begin by assuming that they are different phenomena. Thus we must go beyond Wrathall to distinguish simultaneous concealing (*Verbergung*, *Verbergen*) from *lēthē*, prior concealment (*Verborgenheit*).

I will mark the distinction between simultaneous concealing and prior concealment in the English suffixes. Heidegger does not himself track the distinction in his use of *Verbergung*, *Verbergen*, and *Verborgenheit*; he uses each term to refer to both the activity of concealing and the concealment that is produced, and this sloppiness precludes him from using these terms to track the distinction I am insisting on. (In contrast, he does (at least sometimes) distinguish unconcealing and unconcealment. I return to this difference in a moment.)

Still, Heidegger does deploy different vocabularies when he discusses each phenomenon. As we have seen, *lēthē* is a darkness that is overcome through privation, as un-concealment arises out of it. Simultaneous concealing, in contrast, is often discussed positively as a sheltering. For example: ‘the dis-closure [*Ent-bergen*] is at the same time an en-closure [*Ent-bergen*] [...that] brings it into its essence’ (P: 133/GA54: 198) and which encloses the entity inside its that-and what-being. Such an en-closure or concealing is a ‘sheltering [*Bergung*] of the unconcealed in the unconcealedness of presence, i.e., in being. In such sheltering there first emerges the unconcealed as an entity’ (P: 133/GA54: 198). This sort of preserving complicates

¹⁴ Daniel O. Dahlstrom, ‘Being at the Beginning: Heidegger’s Interpretation of Heraclitus’, 144.

the negativity of concealing and contrasts it with the more simple negativity of a mere absence or lack. As Heidegger puts it in ‘On the Essence of Truth’:

Concealment [*Verborgenheit*] deprives *alētheia* of disclosure yet does not render it *sterēsis* (privation); rather, concealment preserves what is most proper to *alētheia* as its own. Considered with respect to truth as disclosedness, concealment is then un-disclosedness and accordingly the un-truth that is most proper to the essence of truth.

(OET: 148 / GA9: 193)

Heidegger does not have much more to say about how this preserving or saving works or to what sorts of concealing it attaches. I propose distinguishing this preserving and simultaneous concealing from *lēthē*, concealment, and calling it ‘*kruptesthai*’ or ‘*kruptein*’.

‘*Kruptein*’ means *to hide, cover, cloak*, and its passive or middle voiced form, ‘*kruptesthai*’, means *to hide oneself*, ‘to take back into oneself, to hide back [*bergen*] and conceal [*verbergen*] in oneself’ (P:140-141/GA54: 209).¹⁵ While I make no claim about the meaning of the Greek terms themselves, I suggest that in a Heideggerian context ‘*kruptein*’ and ‘*kruptesthai*’ can be taken to name concealings that are simultaneous with unconcealing, in the sense that ‘[b]oth—proffering [*Sichzuschicken*] and withdrawing [*Sichentziehen*—are one and the same, not two different things’ (PR: 62/GA10: 91). They are the same in the sense that both the revealing and concealing take place in a single gesture. Heidegger himself understands *kruptein* as ‘to conceal [*verbergen*] in the sense of a harboring [*Bergen*]’ (H: 105/GA55: 139) and *kruptesthai* as ‘sheltering concealing [*das bergende Verbergen*]’ (P: 60/GA54: 89, translation modified); ‘[*k*]ruptesthai is, as self-concealing [*Sichver-bergen*], not a mere self-closing [*Sichverschließen*] but a sheltering [*Bergen*] in which the essential possibility of rising is preserved—to which rising as such belongs. Self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*] guarantees self-revealing in its true nature’ (EGT: 114/GA7: 278).

¹⁵ LSJ, s.v. ‘κρύπτω’.

The difference between *kruptein* and *kruptesthai* lies in *what* is concealed. *Kruptesthai* is self-concealing, which means that the unconcealing in question conceals itself, or at least some aspect of itself. Heidegger thinks that being conceals itself in this way: ‘being proffers [*schickt*] itself to us, but in such a way that at the same time it, in its essence, already withdraws [*entzieht*]’ (PR: 65/GA10: 95); ‘[i]n [its] emerging-on-its-own, in *phusis*, there reigns [*walten*] after all a self-withdrawal [*Sichentziehen*], and this so decisively that without the latter the former could not reign [*walten*]’ (PR: 64/GA10: 95). In contrast, *kruptein* involves concealing something other than the unconcealing itself—for example, on the second plank, a feature of the entity discovered, or even some other entity. These concealings may be contingent or they may be essential to the unconcealing with which they are simultaneous.

The point of adopting these terms is to keep these phenomena of simultaneous concealing conceptually and linguistically distinct from *lēthē*, the prior concealment that unconcealing presupposes. Despite having access to the vocabulary of *kruptein* and *kruptesthai*, Heidegger does not always distinguish these from *lēthē*, and in fact he has a tendency to collapse all phenomena of concealing and concealment into phenomena of *lēthē*. I explain why he does this in §24. In the meantime, we must vigilantly preserve the distinction between *lēthē*, on the one hand, and *kruptein* and *kruptesthai*, on the other—while, of course, also being on the lookout for clues as to how they are connected. Thus the taxonomical project tracks phenomena of *lēthē*, *kruptesthai*, and *kruptein* on each of Wrathall’s four planks (see Table 2.3).

Notice that the distinction between concealing (*kruptesthai*, *kruptein*) and concealment (*lēthē*) is not quite the same as that between unconcealing (*alētheuein*) and unconcealment (*alētheia*). As Heidegger uses the latter terms, unconcealing (*unverbergen*) is the way that unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) is produced. These terms name the process and the product, respectively. But when I (at least) speak of concealing (*kruptesthai*, *kruptein*) and concealment (*lēthē*), I am not referring to a process and its product. The two are independent of one another, although they are connected by the fact that each has a relationship with unconcealing: one

Table 2.3 Concealment (*lēthē*), self-concealing (*kruptesthai*), and other-concealing (*kruptein*)

Plank	Concealment (<i>lēthē</i>)	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Unconcealment (<i>alētheia</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Other-concealing (<i>kruptein</i>)
One			Linguistic communication		
Two			Discoveredness		
Three			Disclosedness		
Four			The clearing		

(concealment) as that which is presupposed by it, and the other (concealing) as something that may characterise it.

Because of this relationship with unconcealing, however, there is one possible type of case in which concealing and concealment are related as process and product: a case in which an unconcealing conceals itself or something other and produces a concealment (*lēthē₂*) that is then suspended in a further unconcealing (*alētheuein₂*). In that type of case, *kruptesthai* or *kruptein* will issue in an instance of *lēthē*, and so will amount to forgetting, *lanthanein* or *lanthano-mai*. This phenomenon can be accommodated by adding further columns to the taxonomy (see Tables 2.4 and 2.5).

Further, notice that any *unconcealing* that overcomes the *concealment* produced by an earlier *concealing* may in turn simultaneously conceal something—whether itself (*kruptesthai*) or something else (*kruptein*). Such simultaneous concealing may also be essential to the unconcealing, or contingent and possible to overcome in a still further unconcealing. In a final complication, we will see that some instances of *kruptein* also involve *kruptesthai* (in which an unconcealing conceals something else (*kruptein*) and then conceals the very fact that it is concealing (*kruptesthai*)), and some instances of *kruptesthai* also involve *kruptein*. I will complicate each plank as necessary to accommodate these phenomena. (Because of this complexity, the complete taxonomy, as well as each completed plank, will be presented in three separate, but related, tables.)

The next task is to fill out the taxonomy by identifying the various phenomena of concealment and concealing at each level. While there must be a prior concealment (*lēthē*) at each level of unconcealing, there need not be any phenomena of simultaneous concealing

Table 2.4 Self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) and concealment₂ (possible *lēthē₂*)

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē₂</i>)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein₂</i>)
One				
Two				
Three				
Four				

Table 2.5 Other-concealing (*kruptein*) and concealment₂ (possible *lēthē*₂)

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Other-concealing (<i>kruptein</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē</i> ₂)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein</i> ₂)
One				
Two				
Three				
Four				

(*kruptesthai*, *kruptein*) at all—and if there is, there need not be just one. So I will identify and locate in the taxonomy (i) phenomena of *lēthē* at each level, as well as (ii) the most important phenomena of *kruptesthai* and *kruptein* for Heidegger’s project, and (iii) phenomena of *kruptesthai* and *kruptein* that Heidegger mentions. There will be phenomena of *kruptesthai* and *kruptein* that may yet be added to the picture; the point of completing the taxonomy is not to be completely exhaustive but rather to locate the various phenomena that Heidegger mentions so that we can get clear on what the self-concealing of being both is and is not. Since self-concealing is *kruptesthai*, and since (as we will see) it is the being of entities as a whole and as such that Heidegger is concerned with when he discusses being as self-concealing, the self-concealing of being will be whatever phenomenon belongs in the cell for third-plank *kruptesthai*. Any phenomenon of concealment or concealing that belongs in any of the other cells will not be the self-concealing of being.

3. *Phusis Kruptesthai Philei*

That the self-concealing of being is a phenomenon of *kruptesthai* is clear from Heidegger’s association of it with Heraclitus’s fragment 123, which says that *phusis kruptesthai philei*. On a conventional translation, the fragment says: nature loves to hide.¹⁶ Heidegger

¹⁶ E.g. Richard D. McKirahan, tr. *A Presocratics Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia*, ed. Patricia Curd, 42. In contrast, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield translate, ‘The real constitution is accustomed to hide itself’ (fragment 208, in Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 192). The numbering of the fragment

takes it to say that *phusis* or being loves to conceal itself. He translates and glosses the fragment in a variety of ways, all of which say more or less the same thing. For example:

Emergence has as its accompanying necessity
concealment. (FS: 46)

*[D]as Aufgehen hat als zugehörige Notwendigkeit
die Verborgenheit.* (GA15: 343)

The prevailing of things has in itself a striving to
conceal itself. (FCM: 27)

*Das Walten der Dinge hat in sich selbst das Streben,
sich zu verbergen.* (GA29/30: 41)

Self-hiding belongs to the predilection of being.
(OECF: 229)

Das Sichverbergen gehört zur Vor-liebe des Seins.
(GA9: 300)

Emerging to self-concealing gives favor. (H: 84)
*Das Aufgehen dem Sichverbergen schenkt's die
Gunst.* (GA55: 110)

Emergence (or, emerging) is the prevailing or being of entities, and this favours or has a predilection for concealing itself, which it strives to do by necessity. In short: the self-concealing of being is *phusis's* loving of *kruptesthai*.

By interpreting the self-concealing of being as *phusis's* loving of *kruptesthai*, I take Heidegger's claim about being to be equivalent to Heraclitus's claim about *phusis*, as Heidegger understands it. That is, I do not take Heidegger to find in Heraclitus's fragment anything other than Heidegger's own take on being. This approach requires some defence. It is well known that Heidegger's readings of the history of philosophy frequently (but, of course, not always) tend to uncover his own insights rather than ideas that we might honestly attribute to the thinker whom he is interpreting. This is especially true of his interpretations of the pre-Socratics' fragments, the fragmentary

character of which lends itself to motivated interpretation and creative reconstruction. Thus Otto Pöggler claims that Heidegger's goal in reading the pre-Socratics is not 'to contribute to historical research which yields what is objectively demonstrable' but to 'bring[] the matter of his own thinking to language in dialogue with them', 'whether it may now be experienced in the earliest Greek thinking or not'.¹⁷ Similarly, Kenneth Maly and Parvis Emad, in their study of Heidegger's interpretations of Heraclitus, explain that 'the "look back" [to the Greeks] is not to regain "access to the original experiences", but rather to open up, from out of Greek thinking and its unthought, our experience of thinking'.¹⁸ The goal is not to reveal Heraclitus's experience of being as *phusis* but to further articulate what Heidegger wants to say about being.

Further, Heidegger's Nietzschean 'return to the Greeks' is plausibly shaped by the philhellenism of German intellectuals generally and of Nazi scholars in the 1930s and 1940s in particular. The former 'fused their yearnings for cultural unity into an image of a Germany reborn out of its filial bond to an ancient Hellas'.¹⁹ The latter made 'Greco-Roman history into a site or screen for the transfer or projection of all the dreams, obsessions, and fears of National Socialism itself'.²⁰ Heidegger does take umbrage with the ways in which the Nazis appropriated the Greeks, finding their 'love of antiquity' a mere 'pretext for striving to evade every decisive reflection'.²¹ But he has his own 'persistent yearning to recuperate the Greek beginning for his own age'.²² And he plausibly has his dreams satisfied by his interpretation of the pre-Socratics—specifically, his desire to have special access to an originary and revolutionary insight into being, which would position him as the philosophical saviour of Germany and the West.²³ This motivation and influence gives us

¹⁷ Pöggler, 'The Other Beginning', in *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, 164, 166, and 164, respectively.

¹⁸ Maly and Emad, *Heidegger on Heraclitus: A New Reading*, 7.

¹⁹ Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks*, 199.

²⁰ Johann Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans: How the Nazis Usurped Europe's Classical Past*, 13.

²¹ Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 8.

²² Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 180.

²³ There are also recognisably Nazi themes in Heidegger's interpretation of at least one of the pre-Socratic fragments: Heraclitus's fragment 53, which positions war or *polemos* as 'the father of all'. Bambach shows how Heidegger's martial vocabulary generally, and his interpretation of

reason to be suspicious of Heidegger's interpretations of ancient Greek philosophy.

So, despite his protestations that the experience of being as '*phusis*' is a genuine and distinctive ancient Greek experience of being, I think it safest to assume that Heidegger is developing his own account of being in his interpretations of pre-Socratic fragments, including in his interpretation of Heraclitus's claim that *phusis* loves *kruptesthai*. This particular fragment has not been otherwise significant in the scholarly reception and interpretation of Heraclitus, but it is important for Heidegger because it allows him to explore something that he independently holds to be true of being—namely, that it conceals itself.

Accordingly, the obvious place to start in interpreting the self-concealing of being is with Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus's fragment. In this section, I endeavour to show that the task is not so simple and that we need the clarity afforded by the complete taxonomy before we can properly interpret Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus. (Readers who are less familiar with Heidegger's later philosophy might wish to skip this section, since it is designed to provoke confusion. To avoid this experience, begin with the populating of the second plank of unconcealing in §4 and return to this section after §24.)

'*Phusis*' is the ancient Greek word for 'nature'—both the natural world and the nature of things.²⁴ In both senses, it is a dynamic phenomenon. Consider 'the emerging of the seeds sunken in the earth, the sprouting of shoots, the emerging of the blossom' (H: 67/GA55: 87). The blossom, shoots, and seeds all emerge from hiddenness into glorious presencing—as does being as unconcealing in its emerging from concealment or *lēthē*. (Heidegger takes the latter to

this fragment specifically, resonate with right-wing cultural and intellectual trends of the time (Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 130, 256ff). Adam Knowles draws our attention to the anti-Semitic imagery in Heidegger's interpretation of the fragment (Knowles, *Heidegger's Fascist Affinities: A Politics of Silence*, 52; referring to Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 73). Interestingly, although Knowles argues that Heidegger holds that '[t]hrough the Greeks, the Germans would come back to themselves and their language by once again learning the power of silence' (Knowles, *Heidegger's Fascist Affinities*, 51), such silence does not seem to be at stake in the self-concealing of being.

²⁴ LSJ, s.v. 'φύσις'.

be the source of the Greek experience of the former, rather than *vice versa* (H: 67/GA55: 87.) *Phusis* is ‘the unfolding that opens itself up, the coming-into-appearance in such unfolding, and holding itself and persisting in appearance—in short, the emerging-abiding sway’ (IM: 15/GA40: 11; cf. FCM 25ff/GA29/30: 38ff). Conceived as *phusis*, being is the emerging of entities as such and as a whole into presence, and their prevailing there. (More on *phusis* in §11.)

If we think being as this emerging and abiding, it seems counter-intuitive to say that it ‘loves’ or ‘favours’ self-concealing, as Heraclitus does. Concealing and appearing are opposed movements; thus Heidegger says that ‘*phusis* (“emerging” [*Aufgehen*]) and *kruptesthai* (“self-concealing” [*Sichverbergen*], “submerging” [*Untergehen*]) contradict one another. If they are at all able to be brought into a relationship, then it cannot be one of *philein*, of love, but rather can only be one of “hatred”’ (H: 86/GA55: 113). Such hatred would, presumably, amount to cancelling one another out. *Phusis* as appearing would surmount and banish all self-concealing, while self-concealing, when ascendant, would surmount and banish all appearing. Such hatred captures the oppositional character of the two movements. If, instead, *phusis* were to love concealing (*kruptesthai*), such love would presumably forbid all opposition and discord and require perfect amity and concord. But then neither *phusis* nor *kruptesthai* could be what it is.

To understand how *phusis* could love *kruptesthai*, we must understand what it is to love. According to Heidegger, love is ‘the essential will for what is of the essence’ (HI: 131/GA53: 164; cf. NII: 207/GA6.1: 422), which wills for the beloved that it or they come into and persist in their essence, as what or who it is. We should think here of what *Being and Time* called authentic solicitude, which frees the other to come into their being (SZ: 122). Such solicitude is named by the Greek ‘*philein*’ (usually, ‘love’ or ‘friendly feeling’)—if, as Heidegger has it, *philein* ‘is the favor that grants to the other the essence that the other already has, and in such a way that through this granting the granted essence blossoms into its proper freedom’ (H: 98/GA55: 128).

So, to say that *phusis* loves *kruptesthai* is to say that *phusis* allows self-concealing to be what it is, in its essence: ‘[e]merging grants to

self-occluding [*Sichverschließen*] that it be [*wese*]' (H: 100/GA55: 131).²⁵ But it does so 'because self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*] itself, from out of its "essence", allots to emerging what it is' (H: 100/GA55: 131). So, the 'feeling' is mutual: *phusis* loves *kruptesthai*, and *kruptesthai* loves *phusis*. The two together reciprocally allow one another to be what they are; 'each first bestows upon the other its proper nature' (EGT: 114/GA7: 278–9). Heidegger expresses this reciprocal *philein* using romantic language, speaking of 'the reciprocal intimacy of revealing and concealing' (EGT: 114/GA7: 279), and an 'inherently reciprocal favouring' in which '*phusis* and *kruptesthai* are [...] mutually inclined toward each other' (EGT: 114/GA7: 278–9).

But asserting that *phusis* and *kruptesthai* allow one another to be what they are does not yet explain how they do this—especially given their mutual opposition. How does their reciprocal love not result in mutual destruction? One option is to say that there is destruction, but that it is uni-directional, temporary, and essential. Appearing overcomes self-concealing and so comes into its own, but self-concealing comes into its own at the same time, since it belongs to the essence of self-concealing to be so overcome. Self-concealing is the ground out of which appearing arises, and it is in the nature of a ground to be overcome by that which it grounds.

Heidegger seems to subscribe to this sort of interpretation. He says that the 'jointure (i.e. *harmonia*) [...] in which emerging and self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*] hand one another the bestowing of their essences in a reciprocal way' is one in which 'self-concealing

²⁵ Manfred S. Frings points out that Heidegger is 'play[ing] with German "Gunst" [favour] and its cognate word "gönnen" (not to grudge, to grant); such that "[i]n fragment 123, "philei" does not mean "to love" but implies a reciprocal granting of two terms' (Frings, 'Heraclitus: Heidegger's 1943 Lecture Held at Freiburg University', 258). But, even granting Heidegger's wordplay, we can still make sense of *philein* as a form of loving or liking. My interpretation is one way. Dahlstrom offers a similar interpretation, translating '*philein*' as 'like': 'Analogously, we might say, for example, that an introvert likes to hide from others or a camouflaged soldier likes to conceal himself, where the phrase "likes to" supposes that both the introvert and the camouflaged soldier do what is essential for them' (Dahlstrom, 'Being at the Beginning: Heidegger's Interpretation of Heraclitus' 142, footnote 22). Interpretations such as mine and Dahlstrom's also allow one to disagree with Parvis Emad, who argues that '[t]he term *philei* should not be translated as "loving" or "liking" because such translations imply an incompatibility between "rising" and "concealing". Only when the two are totally different from each other can one of them "like" or "love" the other' (Emad, 'Heidegger's Originary Reading of Heraclitus – Fragment 16', 109, Greek transliterated).

[*Sichverbergen*] is what *phusis* bestows from itself as that wherein it itself remains grounded' (H: 108/GA55: 141). As the ground of *phusis*, self-concealing is that out of which *phusis* arises (and that to which it returns): 'emerging [...] can emerge as emerging only from out of self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*]: it draws itself back into this' (H: 116/GA55: 153, cf. H: 107/GA55: 141). Thus Heraclitus's fragment says: 'Rising (out of self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*]) bestows favor upon self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*]' (EGT: 114/GA7: 279).²⁶ It positions *kruptesthai* as that in which *phusis* is grounded and that which it overcomes (*überholt*) (H: 101/GA55:133).²⁷

But the ground out of which *phusis* arises, and which it overcomes, is *lēthē*. So, Heidegger's claim is that being is self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) in the sense that it arises out of a concealment (*lēthē*). But, as we have seen, *lēthē* is a concealment that precedes and is negated by unconcealing, whereas *kruptesthai* is a self-concealing that belongs positively to the happening of being. There are three dimensions of difference. First, *lēthē* is a condition (of concealment) while *kruptesthai* is a happening (concealing). Second, *lēthē* is prior to being while *kruptesthai* is part of its happening. Third, *lēthē* is overcome by unconcealing, whereas *kruptesthai* is loved by it—allowed to be what it is in essence. If this is right, then the *lēthē* that unconcealing presupposes is different from the self-concealing that accompanies it.

Yet Heidegger manifestly identifies *kruptesthai* with *lēthē* when, interpreting Heraclitus's fragment, he positions *kruptesthai* as the ground out of which *phusis* arises. We saw this in the passage I quoted earlier, and we can also see it in the following passage, where (some of) my insertions show Heidegger slipping from *kruptesthai* to *lēthē*:

Heraclitus does not say that entities [in their be-ing] as a matter of fact hide [*verbirgt*] themselves from time to time, but *philei*: they love to

²⁶ See also: "the never going into concealment [*Verbergung*]", never falls prey to concealment [*Verbergung*] only to be dissolved in it, but remains committed to self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*], because as the never-going-into...it is always a rising-out-of-concealment [*Verbergung*]' (EGT: 114/GA7: 279).

²⁷ "The establishing of emerging back into a prior self-occluding; the overcoming of emerging by self-occluding..." (H: 101); "...aus der die Rückgründung des Aufgehens in das Sichverschließen, aber auch die Überholung des Aufgehens durch das Sichverschließen..." (GA55: 133).

hide themselves [*sich zu verbergen*]. It is their proper innermost drive [i.e. *philei*] to remain hidden [*verborgen*] [i.e. *kruptesthai*], and if brought out of [i.e. *alētheuein*] hiddenness [*unverborgen*] [i.e. *lēthē*], to return to it [sc. *Verborgenheit*]. (ET: 9 / GA34: 14; insertions mine)

Heidegger's mistake is interpreting Heraclitus's fragment as making a claim about how *alētheia* happens as a privative phenomenon. He wants to take Heraclitus's fragment as evidence of the 'peculiarly privative, negative character of the Greek conception of truth' as *alētheia* (MFL: 217/GA26: 281, see also OECP: 230/GA9: 301, ET: 9–10/GA34: 13–14, ET: 68/GA34: 93), which it could be only if the *kruptesthai* that *phusis* loves is the *lēthē* that it overcomes.²⁸ This leads him to identify *kruptesthai* and *kruptein* with *lēthē*, as he does for example when he claims that '[a]-*kribēs* has the same form as *a-lēthēs*, *a*-privative and *krupton*: "un-concealed" [*un-verborgen*]' (PS: 47/GA19: 68).²⁹

Yet Heidegger does seem to realise that self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) and concealment (*lēthē*) are distinct, since he makes an effort to argue that the two are connected. For example, he says that 'if prevailing [*Walten*] is torn from concealment [*Verborgenheit*] in the *logos*, then it must, as it were, try to conceal itself [*sich zu verbergen*]' (FCM: 27/GA29/30: 41). Or again: 'Only what in its very essence unconceals and must unconceal itself can love to conceal [*verbergen*] itself. Only what is unconcealing can be concealing [*Verbergung*]' (OECP: 230/GA9: 301). In both cases, the claim is that because unconcealing overcomes concealment, it is characterised by self-concealing. But it is not obvious why arising out of

²⁸ 'It can be shown everywhere in pre-Socratic philosophy and in Plato and Aristotle that this interpretation of the peculiarly privative, negative character of the Greek conception of truth [as *alētheia*] is not etymologically trifling. Let one statement of Heraclitus serve as reference, (Fragment 123): *phusis kruptesthai philei*, the entity in itself and its essence loves to conceal itself [*sich zu verbergen*] and remain in concealment [*Verborgenheit*]' (MFL: 217/GA26: 281, insertion mine).

²⁹ Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, 47/*Platon: Sophistes*, 68. Heidegger does the same thing in interpreting Heraclitus's fragment 93: 'The master, whose Oracle is at Delphi, neither speaks out, nor does he conceal [*verbergen*], but he gives a sign' (FCM: 27/GA29/30: 40–1). Heidegger understands this fragment as contrasting *legein*, as revealing, with *kruptein*, as the concealing presupposed by it. He says that 'the fundamental function of *legein* is to take whatever prevails [*das Waltende*] from concealment [*Verborgenheit*]' (FCM: 27/GA29/30: 41). Here, *kruptein* is positioned as the *lēthē* from which *alētheia* arises.

concealment should require something to subsequently conceal itself. (Compare: if shoots arise out of soil, must they thereafter attempt to cover themselves in soil?)

The connection is perhaps supposed to lie in the fact that *lēthē* is itself self-concealing: 'It is inherent in it [i.e. oblivion [*Vergessenheit*]] to withdraw itself [*sichentziehen*] and to founder in the wake of its own concealment [*Verbergens*]. The Greeks experienced oblivion [*Vergessenheit*], *lēthē*, as a destining of concealment [*Verbergung*]' (EGT: 108/GA7: 272, insertion mine). If concealment is itself self-concealing, then perhaps in arising from concealment, unconcealing takes over and preserves its self-concealing character as a sort of legacy. But I do not find the claim that *lēthē* is self-concealing to be plausible.³⁰ What need would concealment have of concealing itself? And why would this be transmitted as a legacy to all unconcealing? In any case, what this argumentative strategy underscores is not the identity or even close association of *kruptesthai* and *lēthē* but instead their distinctness, which we would have been better off maintaining from the start.

Collapsing *kruptesthai* into *lēthē* does, however, solve the problem that it set out to solve—namely, that of how *phusis* and *kruptesthai* can allow one another to be without destroying one another (H: 89/GA55: 118). It does so by positioning each not simultaneously but successively, like night and day. Night and day are opposed but neither cancels the other out; they are opposed as different and successive stages of a single temporal unity. Heidegger does think appearing and concealing as related in this way, saying that 'day and night in general manifest the events of disclosure [*Entbergung*] and concealment [*Verbergung*]' (P: 60/GE54: 89), *alētheia* and *lēthē*. But he also holds that Heraclitus is talking

³⁰ Heidegger appeals to the middle or passive voiced verb '*lanthanomai*', on which *lēthē* is originally based, to motivate the idea that *lēthē* is intrinsically self-concealing: '*Lanthanomai* says: I am—with respect to my relation to something usually unconcealed—concealed [*verborgen*] from myself. The unconcealed, for its own part, is thereby concealed—even as I am concealed from myself in relation to it. What is present subsides into concealment [*Verborgenheit*] in such a way that I, because of this concealing [*Verbergung*], remain concealed from myself as the one from whom what is present withdraws [*entzieht*]. At the same time, this very concealing [*Verbergung*] is itself thereby concealed' (EGT: 108/GA7: 272). Even if an argument could be found in this thought, it would warrant at most a lexical conclusion.

about something very different in Fragment 123, for ‘according to Heraclitus’s saying, submerging should not just come to replace emerging: rather, emerging should in itself be a submerging, and should indeed actually “bestow favour” to this’ (H: 89/GA55: 118). We saw earlier that to say that *phusis* loves *kruptesthai* is to say that each allows the other to be what it is in its essence. Here, Heidegger explains that this is so not because the latter is the ground of the former but because the latter is an essential activity of the former. *Phusis* is essentially characterised by concealing; *kruptesthai* ‘is essential for...[*phusis*] to unfold its own being’ (FS: 46/GA15: 343). So, *phusis* comes into its own when it conceals, and concealing comes into its own when it is a concealing of *phusis*.

But this interpretation appears to make the original perplexity worse. For, now we are claiming that *phusis*, as emerging, is intrinsically and at the same time concealing. ‘To say that emerging is submerging is like saying that day is night and vice versa, and sounds just like the statement “light is dark”’ (H: 85/GA55: 111). How can appearing be concealing, and vice versa?

The solution lies in the fact that *kruptesthai* is a *self*-concealing. This is marked in Heraclitus’s middle- or passive-voiced ‘*kruptesthai*’, and Heidegger’s use of the reflexive ‘*sich*’ (e.g., in ‘*Sichverbergen*’).³¹ In concealing itself, *phusis* conceals the emerging of entities as a whole and as such into appearing. The entities still emerge into appearing, and their manifestness is not threatened or thwarted by concealing. What is concealed is the event of appearing—the emerging, not what emerges. In this sense, the appearing and concealing operate at different registers and so do not come into conflict. To return to the metaphor of illumination: *kruptesthai* is not analogous to night, where nothing can be seen, but instead to the daylight that allows things to be seen but is itself hidden. In this sense, light is indeed dark.

Sheehan worries that talk of a *self*-concealing is misleading, since it appears to attribute agency to *phusis*:

³¹ So, even if Heidegger’s reflexive need not be doing any real work in the German, it does reflect the Greek. I thank Julian Young for raising a worry about the significance of the reflexive in German.

[W]hile the clearing (*alêtheia*-1) enables the meaningful presence of things (*alêtheia*-2), it itself remains intrinsically undisclosed or ‘hidden’—unknowable in its why and wherefore. There is nothing mystical about this, and one is not talking about being ‘concealing *itself*’ as if it possessed some weird kind of agency. We should avoid the hypostasization and quasi-personalization of the clearing that insinuates itself into Heideggerian discourse via the *faux* reflexive: ‘The clearing hides *itself*’. In this case, verb forms like *sich entziehen* and *sich verbergen* are to be read as ‘The clearing *is* withdraw, *is* hidden’, instead of ‘The clearing *ups* and *hides itself*’.³²

Sheehan is right that we should not read the reflexive as attributing any sort of agency to being or to the clearing. To do this would be to fall into an interpretation of being as the sort of cosmic actor that Sheehan has elsewhere called ‘Big Being.’³³ But it does not follow that the reflexive is ‘faux’ and that it expresses only the intrinsic character of the concealing. As I said, it indicates—very helpfully, in fact—*what* is concealed: *phusis* or unconcealing itself, rather than something else. This is the import of the distinction between *kruptein* and *kruptesthai*. Both are concealings that are simultaneous with an unconcealing, but *kruptesthai* is a concealing in which that very unconcealing is itself concealed, while *kruptein* is a concealing in which something else is concealed. The reflexive marks this distinction.

Further, the reflexive makes the point that Sheehan makes when he says that the clearing *is* withdrawn or hidden—namely, that it is so essentially. ‘Were concealing [*Verbergung*] to fall off and away, then how could revealing [*Entbergung*] still happen?’ (PR: 65/GA10: 95). We saw this essential character earlier, in the reciprocity of the ‘love’ between *phusis* and *kruptesthai*: *kruptesthai* allows *phusis* to be what it is (and, *vice versa*). Far from obliterating appearing, *phusis*’s self-concealing is ‘the bestowing, and keeping safe of that which unfolds as emerging’ (H: 100/GA55: 132). More prosaically, this says that ‘emerging [*Aufgehen*], precisely insofar as it is an

³² Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, 225. Greek transliterated.

³³ Sheehan, ‘A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research’, 189.

emerging, is a submerging [*Untergehen*]' (H: 87/GA55: 116)—or that '[s]elf-hiding [*Sichverbergen*] belongs to the predilection [*Vor-liebe*] of being, i.e., it belongs to that wherein being has secured its essence' (OECF: 229/GA9: 300). *Phusis* is thus concealing and concealed by virtue of its own essence rather than the operation of something other, and in this sense conceals *itself*. Sheehan is right, of course, that we need to hear this as a claim about essence rather than agency. We should also avoid hearing it as a pseudo-psychological claim about some sort of desire for solitude. So, when Heidegger says that '[w]ith reference to itself, unconcealment as such keeps away, keeps to itself' (NIV: 214/GA: 353), for instance, we should keep in mind that *phusis* does not want to be by itself and it does not do anything by itself. But it is self-concealing; essentially concealed.

In saying that *phusis kruptesthai philei*, Heidegger's Heraclitus asserts the self-concealing of being. We know that to say that being is self-concealing is to say that it is part of how it works that it hides itself as it operates. We know also that Heidegger tends to collapse this *kruptesthai* into *lēthē*, although it is not yet clear why. Further, nothing that we have considered so far begins to give us a grip on what Heidegger is actually talking about. When he talks about the self-concealing of being, Heidegger tends to work at a very high level of abstraction. This can allow us to make formal points about the self-concealing of being, as I have done, but it does not bring the phenomenon into view. If we want to do that, then we need to begin somewhere else. I suggest that we begin by completing the taxonomy.

Plank Two

Discovering

I follow Heidegger in beginning my analysis not at the first plank of unconcealing (speaking) but at the second (discovering). Second-plank unconcealment is the entity's having been uncovered as that and what it is in our unconcealing comporting towards it. 'Comporting' (*Verhalten*) is a broad term covering all the ways in which we engage with entities—whether using them, thinking about them, carbon dating them, worshipping them, or otherwise. Whether such comporting is practical or theoretical, explicit or implicit, cognitive or non-cognitive, it is that in which entities show up to us meaningfully. To show up meaningfully is for an entity to be unconcealed as *there* rather than not (i.e., in its *that it is* or that-being) and as *this* sort of thing rather than that sort of thing (i.e., in its *what it is* or what-being). This in turn requires that the entity be grasped in terms of general standards for counting as *there* and *this*. What it takes to be a pair of scissors differs from what it takes to be a watermelon, and what it takes for a watermelon to be *there* differs from what it takes for an exciting opportunity to be *there*. *There* is an exciting opportunity only when the standards for there being an exciting opportunity are met—only when we grasp what is going on in terms of or in light of those standards. So, entities are unconcealed as that and what they are when we engage with them in light of standards for counting as that and what they are. (Heidegger calls this 'freeing an entity for its being' or 'letting it be'). Does such unconcealing overcome a prior concealment (*lēthē*)? I argue that, in it, we can find a prior concealment (*lēthē*) (§4), as well as forms of other-concealing (*kruptein*) (§4, §6), the concealing of the unconcealing itself (*kruptesthai*) (§8), and a subsequent *lēthē*₂ (§8). I consider

each in turn, with brief digressions to consider purported phenomena of earth (§4) and excess (§5) at the second plank, and a longer digression to consider the backgrounding of the world (§7). I complete the second plank of the taxonomy at the end of §8, where you can find it represented in Tables 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.

4. *Lēthē* and Earth

To grasp the entity's showing up as a dis-covering or an un-concealing is to understand that showing up as depriving the entity of a prior concealment, *lēthē*. It is difficult to express this condition positively, but it must be a sort of mute self-containment of entities in non-intelligibility. For example, the grime on my windows is not meaningfully present to me until I uncover it when I start (to think about) cleaning it. Prior to that point, the grime is not a part of my lived environment—not *there* for me at all. Or again, the Shaftesbury Avenue Handicap was not meaningfully present to me at all (even as something about which I had forgotten or as something I did not know much about) until Wikipedia's random article feature brought it up for me.¹ (Apparently, it is a horse race.) Entities can be concealed in this way for individuals or for entire communities—as, for example, was useful gold in quantity in Aotearoa New Zealand prior to 1856. Heidegger would include in this category of concealment the 'merely not yet known' (P: 63/GA54: 94) or the undiscovered, the 'buried over [*verschüttet*]' which 'has at some time been discovered but has deteriorated [*verfiel*] to the point of getting covered up [*Verdeckung*] again' (SZ: 36), and the disguised (SZ: 36).

But not every discovering of entities is a *discovery* in this traditional sense. I discover my computer every morning when I turn it on—and, in fact, I discover it continually in my comporting towards it throughout the day. The computer does not cease being meaningfully present as a computer when I shut it down for the night; it does not become undiscovered in the way that Aotearoa New Zealand's quantity of useful gold was for all of us until 1856, or the

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaftesbury_Avenue_Handicap (accessed 31/05/2016).

Shaftesbury Avenue Handicap was for many of you until a paragraph ago. How, then, are we to think of my comporting towards my computer as an overcoming of a prior *lēthē*? The key is that the prior *lēthē* need not be temporally prior. To say that there is *lēthē* here is not to say that after I shut my computer down for the night it comes to be in the condition that the Shaftesbury Avenue Handicap was in. Rather, the point is that *were it not for my comporting towards it*, the entity would remain in the darkness of unintelligibility. When I do comport towards it, I lift it out of this darkness: I un-cover it, make it intelligible.

So, at the second plank, *lēthē* is an actual or counterfactual unintelligibility that is ontologically and conceptually presupposed by discovering entities as that and what they are. Whether Heidegger is right that discovering entities presupposes this *lēthē* in these ways is a question for another project. But this is the phenomenon that he is talking about when he says things such as: 'Truth (uncoveredness) is something that must always first be wrested from entities. Entities get snatched out of their hiddenness [*Verborgenheit*]. The factual uncoveredness of anything is always, as it were, a kind of robbery' (SZ: 222).

In addition to overcoming a prior concealment, discovering the entity as that and what it is also simultaneously conceals, in various ways. Heidegger never (as far as I know) discusses what is perhaps the most obvious instance of such concealing: I always discover entities in terms of *general* standards for counting as that and what they are, and this necessarily obscures entities in their radical particularity. But this point seems trivial. Notice instead that when I comport towards an entity as x, I at the same time conceal it as y (where x and y are contraries of an appropriate sort). There is a certain richness or depth to entities—a range of ways in which they might be meaningful—that is necessarily covered over when an entity shows up as meaningful in some determinate way. Thus if an invitation shows up to me as *an unwanted imposition*, it is at the same time concealed from me as *an exciting opportunity*. If something shows up to me as available for use, then it cannot show up to me at the same time as a factual case of Dasein. If a mug shows up as *to drink coffee from*, then it is at the same time hidden as *to be*

aesthetically admired as an exemplar of good craftsmanship (although, of course, I can switch between these two different ways of discovering the entity, should my mug warrant it). What it is to uncover an entity as a determinate *that* and *what* is to simultaneously conceal other (suitably opposed) *thats* and *whats* that it might manifest as (where this ‘might’ could indicate either a genuine possibility or a simple logical possibility). This simultaneous concealing is a form of *kruptein* and it is essential to how discovering operates. We saw Heidegger invoke precisely this form of concealing when he described concealing as preserving or sheltering: ‘the dis-closure [Ent-bergen] is at the same time an en-closure [Ent-bergen] [...that] brings it into its essence’ (P: 133/GA54: 198), enclosing the entity inside a determinate that- and what-being. To shelter the entity within its being as *x* is to conceal the entity as *y*.

The concealment of the entity as *y*—and as *p*, *q*, and *r*—means that there is a withheld abundance of intelligibility in entities: an abundance of ways in which entities might be discovered in our comporting towards them. Some commentators take this second-plank form of *kruptein* to be the most important phenomenon of concealing in Heidegger’s thought, because they take it to produce a form of concealment or *lēthē* that they take Heidegger to call ‘earth’.

Iain Thomson argues that the withheld abundance of meaning in entities is visually represented in the background of van Gogh’s painting of an old pair of work shoes, which Heidegger discusses at length in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’. Describing discovering as ‘gestalting’, Thomson explains that ‘[t]o gestalt the hints nature offers us in one way is necessarily not to gestalt them in another’, such that ‘some things (or aspects of things) cannot emerge into the light of our intelligible worlds without others withdrawing into the background (which means that it is impossible for everything to take place in intelligibility all at once).’² Thomson identifies this withheld abundance with what Heidegger calls ‘earth’. ‘Earth’ is a central concept in Heidegger’s middle period—particularly in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’. The question is whether what Heidegger calls ‘earth’ in that text is an abundance of intelligibility in entities

² Thomson, ‘Heidegger’s Aesthetics.’

that is withheld when they are brought into their determinate that- and what-beings.

Earth is first introduced in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ when Heidegger explains how the Greek temple, as a work of art, allows its natural environment to come into salience:

Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws out of the rock the darkness of its unstructured yet unforced support. Standing there, the building holds its place against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm visible in its violence. The gleam and luster of the stone, though apparently only there by the grace of the sun, in fact first brings forth the light of day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of night. The temple’s firm towering makes visible the invisible space of the air. The steadfastness of the work stands out against the surge of the tide and, in its own repose, brings out the raging of the surf. Tree, grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter their distinctive shapes and thus come to appearance as what they are. Early on, the Greeks called this coming forth and rising up in itself and in all things *phusis*. At the same time *phusis* lights up that on which the human being bases its dwelling. We call this the *earth*. (OWA: 21 / GA5: 28)

The temple takes over where *phusis* leaves off,³ allowing entities—stone, tree, cricket—to come into appearing. They come into appearing as natural entities that are what they are not only in terms of their native environment but also in terms of and as part of the landscape as a site of human dwelling, on which the temple is built. Thus when the temple allows stone, tree, and cricket to show up, it also allows the native landscape to show itself—indirectly, as the ground or place of stone, tree, and cricket, and indeed the temple. Thus the world of human beings in this environment is ‘[set] back onto the earth which itself first comes forth as homeland [*heimatliche[r] Grund*]’ (OWA: 21/GA5: 28). As homeland, earth is

³ Cf. ‘[A]rt in some cases completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and in others imitates nature’ (Aristotle, *Physics*, 199a15–17).

the land on which a people dwells, made manifest through the natural entities that the work of art brings into salience.⁴

But not all works of art are like the Greek temple in being situated in a native landscape. Some make manifest a different phenomenon of earth: earth as material *out of which*. In a painting, for instance, earth is present in and presented through the canvas, paint, and colour, out of which the painting emerges: '[w]hen a work is brought forth out of this or that work-material—stone, wood, metal, color, language, tone—we say that it is made, set forth out of' earth (OWA: 23/GA5: 31). Sculpture, building, painting, poetry, and music are all forms of art that bring out the earth in making manifest their materials. In the work of art, '[t]he rock comes to bear and to rest and so first becomes rock; the metal comes to glitter and shimmer, the colors to shine, the sounds to ring, the word to speak' (OWA: 24/GA5: 32). In this second sense, the Greek temple manifests earth by revealing not the native ground in which it is located but the stone out of which it is made.

In both cases, '[t]hat into which the work sets itself back, and thereby allows to come forth, is what we called "the earth"' (OWA: 24/GA5: 32). The temple sets itself back into and so makes manifest both the material of the stone from which it is built and its homeland or proper landscape. It is unclear in what sense the latter involves an essential concealing, except perhaps insofar as it plausibly belongs to homelands that they are only ever manifest indirectly, through that which is built on them and the autochthonous entities that show up there. When Heidegger turns to address the sense in which earth involves concealing, he appeals to earth as the material out of which the work of art is made. This material manifests a sort of impenetrability:

The stone presses downwards and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness weighs down on us, at the same time, it denies us any penetration into it. If we attempt such penetration by smashing the rock, then it shows us its pieces but never anything inward, anything

⁴ For the Nazi dimensions of Heidegger's thinking of earth as homeland, see 'Chapter 1: The Myth of the Homeland' in Bambach's *Heidegger's Roots*.

that has been opened up. The stone has instantly withdrawn again into the same dull weight and mass of its fragments. If we try to grasp the stone's heaviness in another way, by placing it on a pair of scales, then we bring its heaviness into the calculable form of weight. This perhaps very precise determination of the stone is a number, but the heaviness of the weight has escaped us. Color shines and wants only to shine. If we try to make it comprehensible by analyzing it into numbers of oscillations it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth shatters every attempt to penetrate it. [...] The earth is openly illuminated as itself only where it is apprehended and preserved as the essentially undisclosable, as that which withdraws from every disclosure, in other words, keeps itself constantly closed up [*verschlossen*]. (OWA: 24–5 / GA5: 33)

Solidity, heaviness, and colour seem to disappear when we try to access them as such. The inaccessibility in and of such materiality is the concealing that characterises earth. This concealing—call it 'earthing'—is a form of second-plank *kruptein*: when the material of a work of art is uncovered, something is concealed—its interiority, as it were. That concealed interiority is earth.

Thomson takes the concealment produced here to be a withheld abundance of intelligibility not only because of his broader interpretation of the role of van Gogh's painting in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' but also because Heidegger says of it: '[t]he self-seclusion [*Sichverschließen*] of the earth is, however, no uniform, inflexible staying-in-the-dark [*Verhangenbleiben*], but unfolds, rather, into an inexhaustible richness of simple modes and shapes' (OWA: 25/GA5: 34). Thomson takes this to be the claim that 'earth's "inexhaustible abundance of simple modes and shapes" [cannot be brought] completely into the light of our worlds [*sic*].'⁵ But notice that the contrast in the passage is not between that which is held in the dark and that which is brought into the light. The contrast is between two types of concealing: concealing as simple hiding or obscuring ('uniform, inflexible staying-in-the-dark'), and concealing as a type of unfolding or manifesting ('unfolding [...] into an

⁵ Thomson, 'Heidegger's Aesthetics.'

inexhaustible richness'). Manifesting can be a type of concealing if what is manifest is nonetheless not available to or penetrable by us. Such concealing hides what it conceals in plain sight, as it were. This is the point that Heidegger wanted to make by speaking of the material of the work of art, which is manifest to us and yet, in its very manifestness, impenetrable. Thus, he goes on: 'To be sure, the painter, too, makes use of pigment; he uses it, however, in such a way that the colors are not used up but begin, rather, for the first time, to shine' (OWA: 25/GA5: 34). The colours shine, and are manifest to us—and *still* are hidden and impenetrable. The work of art does not conceal or obliterate ('use up') colour. It makes it manifest. But, precisely as so manifest, colour is withheld from us. We do not grasp it. All we can see are 'simple modes and shapes': shades of varying intensity, brushstrokes, plays of light and dark. Colour 'shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained' (OWA: 25/GA5: 33).

This second-plank form of *krupstein* is interesting and distinctive, but it belongs only (because it belongs essentially) to the material of works of art. (This, assuming that other entities do not make their material manifest in the same way). Thus far, Heidegger's account of concealing and concealment in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' seems very narrow. Since 'earth' names the native landscape and the material of works of art, any concealing or concealment associated with it will not apply to all entities or to all uncovering, as Thomson would have it. This is so unless Heidegger is speaking synecdochally. Perhaps what can be said of works of art can, in some sense, be said of any entity. That would mean that there is a more general, second-plank account of uncovering entities, and its associated concealments and concealings, to be found in 'The Origin of the Work of Art'.

The fact that works of art are such distinctive entities makes me suspicious of this sort of reading. It is not clear that we can develop a general account of second-plank phenomena from what Heidegger says here. (I discuss the third-plank phenomenon of earth in §24.) Still, Heidegger has been read this way, and he does say things such as: '[e]arth is that in which the arising of everything that arises is brought back—as, indeed, the very thing that it is—and sheltered'

(OWA: 21/GA5: 28). This is a claim about all entities—about ‘everything that presences’ (OWA: 25/GA5: 33)—rather than a claim about entities associated with works of art only. So perhaps there is a correlate in all entities to the impenetrability of the material of the work of art. This might be what Richard Polt calls ‘excess’.

5. Excess

According to Polt, ‘excess’ names the fact of entities’ being *there*, independently of our making sense of them. Making sense of entities allows us to encounter them as *what* they are, but beyond this meaningful ‘what’ lies something further: *that* they are. Polt gives the example of a shoe: ‘When I say, “Here it is!” I mean not only that the shoe lies ready, but also that something other than meaning is showing up now—something that is available for me to wear it, name it, and talk about it, but is not reducible to the meaning it has for me.’⁶ The meaning of the shoe is its what-being, and Polt identifies this with its being. Beyond this being lies the fact of ‘the *existence* of beings: in addition to having meaning, beings *are* (there is something instead of nothing).’⁷ This existing or that-being is distinct from and irreducible to the what-being or meaning of entities. It belongs to entities *in excess* of their meaning for us. And since that-being exceeds all meaning, it is a form of concealment. Excess is ‘resistance to definition, resistance to discovery, resistance to sense and essence. It conceals itself at the same time as it sustains the world of sense that tries, yet inevitably fails, to interpret it.’⁸ It shows up to us as fundamentally mysterious.

So while Thomson identified a hidden reserve of meaning concealed in entities, Polt finds in them an absence of meaning—or rather, an essential non-meaning. He associates this with nature: ‘not nature as it is studied by natural science, which has already interpreted its basic features, but nature as the mystery that sustains

⁶ Polt, ‘Meaning, Excess, and Event’, 34.

⁷ Polt, ‘Meaning, Excess, and Event’, 27.

⁸ Polt, ‘Meaning, Excess, and Event’, 38.

all interpretations.’⁹ I take it that to sustain interpretations is to be a sort of basis or substrate onto which the meaning that we give things adheres. If it were possible for that meaning to, as it were, slip off, then we would have an experience of nature very much like what Albert Camus describes as an absurd experience:

[P]erceiving that the world is ‘dense’, sensing to what a degree a stone is foreign and irreducible to us, with what intensity nature or a landscape can negate us. At the heart of all beauty lies something inhuman, and these hills, the softness of the sky, the outline of these trees at this very minute lose the illusory meaning with which we had clothed them, henceforth more remote than a lost paradise. The primitive hostility of the world rises up to face us across millennia. [...] The world evades us because it becomes itself again.¹⁰

This ‘world become itself’ again is at least analogous to the excess that Polt wants to find in all entities, beyond their meaningfulness to us. And the density of the world and the foreignness of the stone that Camus describes should put us in mind of Heidegger’s description of the stubborn materiality of the material of a work of art. Indeed, Polt thinks that what Heidegger calls ‘earth’ in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ is what he calls ‘excess.’¹¹ Consider the full context of the quote with which I began the paragraph:

‘Earth’ has to do with our immersion in the multiplicity of given beings, beings that are not exhausted by our current interpretations of the being of beings. In this sense, earth is nature—not nature as it is studied by natural science, which has already interpreted its basic features, but nature as the mystery that sustains all interpretations.¹²

⁹ Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy*, 144.

¹⁰ Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, 14.

¹¹ I believe that Andrew Mitchell offers the same interpretation of earth when he says that it is ‘phenomenality as such’ (Mitchell, *The Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger*, 79), ‘the gravity and weight of existence’ (Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 82).

¹² Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 144. Compare: ‘Meaning or illumination (world) always depends on and refers to an uninterpreted excess (earth)—a *lēthē* that shadows *alētheia*’ (Polt, ‘Meaning, Excess, and Event’, 38. Greek transliterated).

If this were right, then ‘earth’ in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ would name a concealed dimension of all discovered entities and so a general, second-plank phenomenon of concealment—namely, the excessive fact that entities *are*. I am going to argue that there is no such second-plank phenomenon and that if there were, it would not be what Heidegger calls ‘earth’ in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’.

In ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, Heidegger does mention something that sounds much like excess: the fact that ‘[e]ntities refuse themselves to us down to that one and seemingly most trivial feature which we meet most immediately when all we can say of an entity is that it is’ (OWA: 30/GA5: 40). Notice, first, that saying of an entity *that it is* is a way of making sense of it, not of pointing to something that exceeds all meaning. Polt thinks that when excess is manifest to us, what we experience is not excess itself but instead what he calls the *meaning* of excess.¹³ We impose a meaning on something that is itself beyond meaning. Yet Heidegger makes the opposite point just a paragraph earlier: ‘even to be *concealed* [verborgen] is something the entity can only do within the scope of the illuminated’ (OWA: 30/GA5: 40). Entities show up to us as beyond our sense-making only within the context of our sense-making. As Heidegger explained in *Being and Time*, even taking something as independent of our sense-making—as purely present-at-hand—is a way of making sense of it (SZ: 207–8).

The reason is that an entity’s that-being belongs to its being meaningful. Polt is mistaken in equating an entity’s being with its what-being and locating its that-being as external to all being or meaning. For the that-being of an entity is one of the ways in which entities show up meaningfully to us: as there, rather than not. Along with what-being and, sometimes, how-being, it is a mode of an entity’s meaningful being. Thus the shoe is meaningful not only as a shoe, but also as *there*.

That that-being is a dimension of being or meaning is clear from the fact that Heidegger is an ontological pluralist about that-being. He does not think that entities’ being-there is some

¹³ Polt, ‘Meaning, Excess, and Event’, 33.

mysterious inaccessible fact about them but instead discusses different modes of that-being at some length. The *that it is* of Dasein is its facticity, which is a kind of *thereness* that essentially includes self-understanding (SZ: 56). This is quite different from the *that it is* of natural entities—factuality—which is the brute fact of their *thereness* and involves no self-awareness (SZ: 135). The *that it is* of equipment (say, of a shoe) is its availability: its being ready-to-hand for someone to use (SZ: 69, 71).¹⁴ This is the dimension of meaning that breaks down when the shoe is missing, broken, or obstructed (SZ: 73).

We might think that when this dimension of meaning breaks down, the entity's truly excessive that-being comes to the fore, in the sheer bruteness of its being *there*. What Heidegger actually holds is that a dimension of presence-at-hand is revealed within its readiness-to-hand (SZ: 73), which is to say that its independence is revealed within the context of its availability. As we saw, being independent of us is a way for entities to make sense in their that-being. Even in a breakdown as severe as the mood of angst, what is revealed to us is not a dimension of entities beyond all meaning, but instead 'the *possibility* of the ready-to-hand in general; that is to say, [...] the world itself' (SZ: 187). As I argue in §7, the world is an entity (SZ: 64)—specifically, a network of references in terms of which ready-to-hand entities can make sense as that and what they are. In revealing this entity, angst also thereby reveals Dasein as *in* the world, and so Dasein's being as being-in-the-world.¹⁵ Angst is an ontico-ontological revelation and not an ontic one. It does not reveal the excessive fact that entities are.¹⁶

¹⁴ As John Haugeland notes, Heidegger identifies both being ready-to-hand (SZ: 69, 71) and being involved (assigned, referred) in the equipmental context (SZ: 84) as the being of equipmental entities (Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed: John Haugeland's Heidegger*, 25, footnote 10; originally published as 'Dasein's Disclosedness', 70, footnote 21). The former is the that-being of items of equipment, which are *there* rather than not when they are ready-to-hand (Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, 105) and the latter is the what-being of items of equipment, which are *what* they are, rather than some other sort of thing, by virtue of their involvement in an equipmental context (Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, 105–6).

¹⁵ Note that the account of angst in 'What is Metaphysics?' is importantly different from that in *Being and Time*. See §21.

¹⁶ The passage in §40 that might lead readers to think that angst reveals an excess in entities is this one: 'the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand discovered within-the-world is, as such, of no consequence; it collapses into itself; the world

There are, of course, special experiences in which the fact that something *is* strikes us especially. The work of art is one entity that lends itself to this experience. Heidegger calls the that-being of the work of art its createdness (OWA: 39/GA5: 52) and he explains:

In the work, on the other hand, the fact that it *is* as such a thing, is what is unusual. The happening of its createdness does not simply reverberate through the work; rather, the work casts before itself the eventful fact that, as a work, this work is, and exhibits this fact constantly. The more essentially the work opens itself, the more luminous becomes the uniqueness of the fact that it is rather than is not. The more essentially this thrust comes into the open, the stranger and more solitary the work becomes. In the bringing forth of the work there lies the offering forth of the 'that it is'. (OWA: 40 / GA: 53)

This powerful manifestation of singular that-being is plausibly what Walter Benjamin called the 'aura' of a work of art.¹⁷ And this passage might be a further hint that Heidegger is interested in the that-being of entities in 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. But the that-being of the work of art is not posited here as a site of concealment. It is instead a dimension of meaningfulness that is luminously exhibited. And what is thus manifest is the work of art's createdness, not the aspect of it that Heidegger calls 'earth'. So, while Polt identifies that-being with excess and earth, Heidegger distinguishes the work of art's that-being from earth and does not think it as an excessive concealment.

This suggests that my earlier association, *via* Camus, of Polt's excess with the manifestness of the materiality of the work of art was mistaken. And indeed, I think that Polt would reject it—precisely because he thinks that any manifestness of an entity's that-being is the *meaning* of excess rather than excess itself. The manifestness of

has the character of completely lacking significance' (SZ: 186). This might be taken to say that all meaning falls away from entities, which stand naked before us in their excess. It is certainly an important interpretive puzzle precisely what Heidegger means in this passage. 'Significance' is 'the structure of the world' (SZ: 87) and so is plausibly the worldhood or being of the world (SZ: 65). The claim is thus that the world lacks its structure or being. While it is unclear what this could mean, it is hard to see how it could be the claim that entities lack meaning.

¹⁷ Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.

an entity's that-being is not the entity's true that-being. But that means, again, that Polt's excess cannot be the same as earth in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', as he claims. For '[e]arth is not simply the closed but that which rises up as self-closing [*Sichverschließendes*]' (OWA: 31/GA5: 42) (as does, for instance, the materiality of the work of art's materials), whereas Polt's excess does not so rise up into self-manifesting. And it means, second, that Polt is positing excess as some sort of noumenal substratum. But Heidegger rejects any noumenal substrate for the meaningful appearing of entities.¹⁸ He holds that when we make sense of entities, we allow those entities to show themselves as they are; we do not throw meaning on top of some non-intelligible substrate. But Polt seems committed, as does Camus, to the idea that there is something *there* underneath and beyond the meaning that we make of things.

Polt acknowledges that Heidegger rejects this sort of noumenal move *for being*. As he explains it, there is nothing 'behind' or 'beyond' being when being is manifest to us.¹⁹ Absent that manifestation, there simply is no meaning. But Polt takes his own account to be different in that he locates the noumenal excess not in being but *in entities*. I do not, however, think that this move solves the problem. Heidegger's point is not that when being shows itself there is nothing 'behind' it. When Heidegger talks about being, he is always talking about the being *of an entity* (plank two) or the being *of entities as a whole and as such* (plank three). (I take the latter to be what is named by 'being as such' and 'being itself'). To reject the move that posits something beyond being is to say that when *an entity* shows itself or *entities as a whole and as such* show themselves, there is nothing 'beyond' or 'behind' that manifesting. This says: there is nothing to entities beyond their meaningful presencing to us. Of course, this claim raises problems for Heidegger, many of which are articulated in the debate over where to situate Heidegger's ontology vis-à-vis realism and idealism.²⁰ I do not want to wade into that

¹⁸ Heidegger explicitly rejects Kant's thing-in-itself in *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 68–9. See also SZ: §7.

¹⁹ Polt, 'Meaning, Excess, and Event', 30.

²⁰ See, for example, William Blattner, 'Is Heidegger a Kantian Idealist?', Blattner, 'Heidegger's Kantian Idealism Revisited', David R. Cerbone, 'World, World-Entry, and

debate here, and I cannot here solve the problems that it raises. But I do want to insist that because being is always *of* entities, whether in a second-plank or third-plank way, attributing excess to entities (in their being) amounts to attributing excess to (the) being (of entities). So, this strategy does not help Polt to get around Heidegger's rejection of the noumenal for being. There *is* no excess: no that-being that presents itself meaningfully to us but is independent of that presentation. There is no distinction between what Polt calls 'excess' and 'the meaning of excess.' There is just the meaning of excess—or rather, that-being as a dimension of meaningful being.²¹

Polt might push back against this argument by insisting that the phenomenon of excess is guaranteed by the very distinction between being and entities. He argues: 'The being of an entity, as its essence or meaning, is not itself that entity. This is the famous "ontological difference". Interpreted phenomenologically, it tells us that meaning enables the self-showing of entities, but those entities are other than meaning, or exceed it.'²² I see two problems with this argument: first, that is not the ontological difference, and second, excess does not obviously follow from it. First, the ontological difference does not claim that the being of an entity is distinct from *that* entity.²³ As formulated in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, the ontological difference is 'the differentiation between being and entities' (BPP: 17/GA24: 22), where Heidegger's '*das Seiende*' ('that which is') can refer either singularly to 'an' or 'the' entity or collectively to 'all' entities. His earlier anticipation of the ontological difference in *Being and Time* draws out the significance of the differentiation: '[t]he being of entities "is" not an [*ein*] entity' (SZ: 6). Heidegger's formulations aim to draw a bright line between all

Realism in Early Heidegger', Kris McDaniel, 'Heidegger and the "There Is" of Being', and Joseph K. Schear, 'Phenomenology and Metaphysics: On Moore's Heidegger'.

²¹ I believe that my objections to Polt's concept of excess also apply to Capobianco's account, since the latter strikes me as roughly the same as the former. Capobianco does claim, however, that the concealing is located in third-plank 'manifestation' rather than in entities (Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 63). He also equates this 'excess of manifestation' not only with earth but also with both *lêthē* and *kruptesthai* (Capobianco, *Heidegger's Ways of Being*, 63).

²² Polt, 'Meaning, Excess, and Event', 32.

²³ For more on the ontological difference, see my 'The Trouble with the Ontological Difference'.

entities, on the one hand, and being, on the other hand. They aim to establish a sharp distinction between the ontological and the ontic (which remain, of course, tightly paired). Polt's formulation draws a line between any given entity and its being, aiming to establish the non-identity of the two. These are very different claims. Polt's claim does plausibly follow from Heidegger's claim. That being is not an entity does entail that an entity and its being are non-identical, since if they were identical then being would be an entity. But, second, it does not automatically follow from this non-identity that an entity exceeds its being in the way that Polt holds. It might follow that the entity is *other than* its being, but whether it does so depends on what 'other than' means. Whether it makes sense to use the vocabulary of 'excess', 'more', and 'beyond' to express that 'other than' is far from clear. What does it mean for an entity to be more than—or less than—its being? What precisely is the relationship between being and entities, if they are non-identical but being is always *of* entities? There is a whole ontology yet to be worked out here. In the interim, excess cannot be derived from distinctness—or directly from the ontological difference.

Return now to the first passage in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' that I mentioned, where it seemed that Heidegger was talking about Polt's excess. He said: '[e]ntities refuse themselves to us down to that one and seemingly most trivial feature which we meet most immediately when all we can say of an entity is that it is' (OWA: 30/GA5: 40). I said to notice, first, that this casts entities' that-being as a dimension of their meaningfulness, and I have spent the bulk of this section defending that interpretation of that-being. But notice now, and second, what role this claim is playing in Heidegger's argument in the text. Heidegger has just contrasted the traditional notion of truth as correctness with his notion of truth as unconcealment. He posits this unconcealment as opening an illuminated realm within which entities show up (OWA: 29/GA5: 39). When entities do show up, they can show up in a concealed manner, and in one of two ways. Entities can show up as something other than what they are, in a condition of seeming or semblance. And entities can show up in such a way that we cannot tell what they are but only *that* they are. This refusal of what-being is Heidegger's point in

the passage I quoted. The passage does not mention the essential mystery of an entity's that-being but instead the contingent mystery of an entity's refused what-being. So, I find no evidence of Polt's excess in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' and I do not think that the phenomenon is possible within Heidegger's framework.

Since I do not see a discussion of Polt's excess (§5) or Thomson's inexhaustible richness (§4) among the second-plank phenomena discussed in 'The Origin of the Work of Art'—nor among second-plank phenomena generally—I will not add these concealments to the taxonomy. The second-plank phenomenon of concealing contributed by 'The Origin of the Work of Art' is the impenetrability of the material of a work of art.

6. Essential *Kruptein*

We have seen that, in uncovering the work of art, we make manifest the concealing of its materiality, which is manifest as withheld from us. Since our discovering simultaneously conceals something other than itself, this 'earthing' is a form of *kruptein*. Similar types of simultaneous concealing occur whenever we discover entities as skills, tools, signs, secrets, and mysteries. To uncover an entity as one of these sorts of entities is to conceal something.

First, to uncover an entity as a secret or a mystery is to conceal whatever it is that is secret or mysterious. It might seem a bit odd to say that it is our uncovering that conceals—that it is our making sense of something as a secret that hides what is secreted away. But it makes less sense to think that something could be hidden from us if it does not show up to us at all as so hidden. Simply not knowing something does not a secret or mystery make. What makes something a secret or a mystery is that it, like the work of art, is manifest as hidden—manifestly unknown (a 'known unknown') or apparent as an 'unknown unknown'.²⁴ Heidegger says that the mystery is '[t]hat

²⁴ The interlocutor in Heidegger's 'A Dialogue on Language' disagrees: 'A mystery is a mystery only when it does not even come out *that* mystery is at work' (OWL: 50/GA12: 140).

which according to its essence preservingly conceals [*verwährend verbirgt*], and thus remains concealed in its essence and entirely hidden [*verborgen*], though nonetheless it somehow appears' (NIV: 226/GA6.2: 369–70).

Uncovering something as a sign also conceals, but in a slightly different way. Heidegger discussed the way that signs reveal in *Being and Time* (§17), and in *Parmenides* he turns to their concealing: 'the sign conceals [*verbirgt*], and indeed as sign, always only denoting and referring, but never openly displaying what it refers to in the same way it itself, as self-showing, appears' (P: 32/GA54: 47). The claim seems to be that in order to point to that which it shows, the sign must 'get in the way' (as it were) of that which it shows, thereby stopping us from seeing it directly. For instance, a road sign showing a steep gradient does not transparently direct us to that steep gradient but in some sense interposes itself between us and it. (This is why road signs are poor safety devices: they can lead to distracted driving and information overload.) That the sign gets between us and what it points towards is presumably essential to how the sign works as a sign, meaning that the sign can only reveal that to which it points if it also occludes it. We saw that, in contrast, secrets and mysteries—like works of art—can only occlude what they occlude by revealing that occluding. They are revealings that conceal, whereas the sign 'is in every case a concealing that shows [*ein zeigendes Verbergen*]' (P: 32/GA54: 47). Discovering something as a sign thus always at the same time accomplishes this concealing.

A third type of case in this vicinity is the concealing that occurs when we discover something as a tool or a skill. Skills and tools are entities that have a distinctive transparency, which means that successfully discovering them essentially involves covering them over. As self-help and leadership books never tire of reminding us, expertise effaces itself and becomes transparent—not only to the expert, who no longer thinks that they are doing anything difficult or special, but also to the observer, for whom what the expert does looks effortless. The skill shows up to both the expert and the observer in its apparent absence: it seems that there is no skill or expertise at all. Similarly for tools:

The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw [*zurückzuziehen*] in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work—that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. (SZ: 69–70)

The more the tool disappears—the less engagement, attention, and skill it requires—the more effective it is as a tool. And conversely: ‘The handier a piece of equipment, the more inconspicuous is the fact that, for example, a hammer of a certain kind is, that is, exists; the handier a piece of equipment, the more completely it preserves itself in its equipmentality’ (OWA: 39–40/GA5: 53). A less handy piece of equipment will be less effaced, and it will also be less inconspicuous in the hands of a less skilful user. As entities *in order to*, tools are most what they are when they are designed and used in such a way that they deliver us directly over to the goal and do not obtrude themselves and their instrumentality. They presence most fully as themselves when they conceal themselves. (This is what distinguishes the materiality of tools from the materiality of works of art: tools occlude their materiality while the work of art flaunts its (hidden) materiality.)²⁵ Readers of Heidegger tend to call this the ‘transparency’ of tools, despite the fact that Heidegger usually reserves ‘transparent’ (*durchsichtig*) for describing Dasein’s authentic self-understanding. Heidegger calls the ‘transparency’ of tools, ‘the inconspicuousness of the proximally ready-to-hand’ (SZ: 107). The proximate invisibility of tools is the paradigm case of simultaneous, essential concealing, and it is frequently used as a model for the only general form of second-plank *kruptein*: the backgrounding of the world.

²⁵ ‘To be sure, the painter, too, makes use of pigment; he uses it, however, in such a way that the colors are not used up but begin, rather, for the first time, to shine. To be sure, the poet, too, uses words, not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who must use them up, but rather in such a way that only now does the word become and remain truly a word’ (OWA: 25/GA5: 34).

7. The Backgrounding of World

The backgrounding of the world is unlike the other forms of second-plank *krupptein* that I have discussed so far because it is a concealing that occurs not when we unconceal some distinctive sort of entity—such as a tool or a secret—but when we unconceal any entity whatsoever. To unconceal an entity as that and what it is is to grasp it in terms of or in light of some standard for counting as that and what it is. A tool, for instance, is uncovered as the tool that it is when we take it as *in order to* achieve some particular end, *towards which* our use of it is directed (SZ: 84). The *in order to* and *towards which* of the tool together are its essence or what-being—what Heidegger calls its ‘involvement’ (*Bewandtnis*). (I will complicate this account significantly in §11.) Since any tool’s *in order to* and *towards which* will make essential reference to other items of equipment, involvements come in an interconnected web: a totality of involvements (*Bewandtnisganzheit*).²⁶ This totality is organised by that *for the sake of which* all the various involvements are, which is a way of being a case of Dasein. Thus, for instance, being a writer is that for the sake of which all the tools of the writing trade are, which is to say that these tools are what they are by virtue of what it takes to be a writer. The network of involvements organised by some for-the-sake-of-which is a ‘referential context of significance’.²⁷ It is a network of interrelated meanings, in terms of which particular entities show up meaningfully. When we do discover an entity as meaningful, that framework of meaning retreats into the background:

²⁶ I follow Heidegger in focusing on the what-being of entities to the apparent exclusion of their that-being. The that-being of ready-to-hand entities is not their involvement but their being-ready-to-hand—or their readying-to-hand, or being available (SZ: 69). There are surely standards for counting as available rather than not, which will be different for different entities. (What it takes to be *available* for a pair of scissors is different from what it takes for the Shaftesbury Avenue Handicap to be *available*). These different standards of availability will likely refer to one another, and they will certainly refer to the involvements that give the what-being of various sorts of entities. Thus there is reason to think that there is more to the world than the totality of involvements. But I will continue to speak primarily of involvements for the sake of simplicity.

²⁷ Heidegger does not use this precise phrase until SZ: 129, but the terminology is introduced in §18.

The ready-to-hand is always understood in terms of a totality of involvements. This totality need not be grasped explicitly by a thematic interpretation. Even if it has undergone such an interpretation, it recedes into an understanding which does not stand out from the background. And this is the very mode in which it is the essential foundation for everyday circumspective interpretation. (SZ: 150, cf. 83)

In order to engage with the entity discovered, we overlook or look through the world on the basis of which it was discovered. In this way, discovering any entity conceals the world.

This concealing is a form of second-plank *kruptein*: discovering an entity—any entity—conceals something else, namely the world. Further, what is concealed here is another entity, since world is an entity. It is worth pausing on this point, since some people take the backgrounding of the world to be a third-plank phenomenon—specifically, third-plank *kruptesthai*, the self-concealing of being. But the self-concealing of being cannot be the backgrounding of the world because ‘world’ is not another word for being. ‘World’ names a particular entity. That it is concealed when any other entity is discovered is a second-plank phenomenon. (That being is concealed when entities are discovered, I discuss in §14.)

Of course, there is significant ambiguity in Heidegger’s texts concerning whether world is an entity. One might point to, for instance, Heidegger’s unequivocal claim that ‘[w]orld as a wholeness [*Ganzheit*] “is” not an entity’ (OEG: 121/GA9: 157). But I take it that what he means there is that world is not ‘one particular entity among others’ (OEG: 128/GA9: 167) (but, see §11). World is a very distinctive entity with a very special status: it ‘is not an entity-within-the-world’ (SZ: 72). It is, in fact, this special status that leads to the ambiguity as to where world should be located vis-à-vis the ontological difference between being and entities. On the one hand, world is that on the basis of which entities show up as that and what they are and so has some claim to be identified with being, which is ‘that on the basis of which [*woraufhin*] entities are already understood’ (SZ: 6). As such a basis, ‘world is not an entity at all’ (OEG: 122/GA9: 158). ‘World never *is*, but *worlds*’ (OEG: 126/GA9: 164), just as temporality (*die Zeitlichkeit*) ‘is’ not but temporalises itself

(*zeitigt sich*) (SZ: 328) and the nothing (*das Nichts*) ‘is’ not but nihilates itself (*nichtet sich selbst*) (WM: 90/GA9: 114). On the other hand, world is an entity: ‘that entity which Dasein, as something existing, is already alongside’ (SZ: 106); ‘that ontical condition which makes it possible for entities within-the-world to be discovered’ (SZ: 88). When Heidegger lays out the four different senses of ‘world’ in *Being and Time*, the one relevant to his analysis is an explicitly ontic one: “World” can be understood in another ontical sense [...] as that “wherein” a factual Dasein as such can be said to “live” (SZ: 65). If it seems strange to think of Dasein’s ‘wherein’ as an entity, notice that a system of instrumental and other meaningful relationships is something that *is*. Indeed, this sort of entity is the object of ontic sciences such as anthropology and cultural studies. And in *Being and Time*, Heidegger himself undertakes to identify the being of this entity, which he calls worldhood (SZ: 65).

World also has a distinctive relationship with Dasein, as being-in-the-world and as the entity that understands being. This distinctive relationship further complicates the question of whether world is or is not an entity. When Heidegger says that ‘Dasein *is* its world existingly [*Dieses ist existierend seine Welt*]’ (SZ: 364), he suggests that as Dasein goes about its existing it not only constitutes itself as an entity but also constitutes world as an entity. World is very plausibly the sort of entity that arises out of Dasein’s being, since world—like sciences (SZ: 11)—‘has Dasein’s kind of being [*Seinsart*]’ (SZ: 364), in such a way that ‘[i]n so far as Dasein temporalizes itself, a world *is* too’ (SZ: 365). Another way to put the relationship, however, brings us back to the other side of the ontological difference: world belongs to Dasein’s being as being-in-the-world. ‘Ontologically, [...] the world belongs essentially to Dasein’s being as being-in-the-world’ (SZ: 187); ‘world [...] is] an essential item in the structure [*wesenhaftes Strukturmoment*] of being-in-the-world, [it] belongs to the basic constitution [*Grundverfassung*] of Dasein’ (SZ: 209). This means that world is ‘a constituent of transcendence’ (MFL: 180/GA26: 232).²⁸ Or, perhaps it *is* transcendence:

²⁸ Cf.: ‘World co-constitutes the unitary structure of transcendence’ (OEG: 109/GA9: 139).

Anticipating, we can name the fourth [concept of world] the ontological concept of world that indicates, not human society in an ontical way, but indicates ontologically the metaphysical essence of Dasein as such with respect to its basic metaphysical constitution, i.e., transcendence.

(MFL: 180 / GA26: 232)

There are reasons for identifying world with Dasein's being. After all, 'world shows itself to be that for the sake of which Dasein exists [...] Yet that for the sake of which Dasein exists is itself' (OEG: 121–122/GA9: 157). The for-the-sake-of-which that belongs to and organises world is Dasein's own being. But it is also one dimension of the world as a referential context of significance, which suggests that we should not identify Dasein's being with world but instead take Dasein's being to be an aspect of the world. This would make world a very special entity indeed—so special, in fact, that Heidegger might be inclined to say that '[w]orld *worlds* [Welt *weltet*], and is more fully in being [*ist seiender*] than all those tangible and perceptible things in the midst of which we take ourselves to be at home' (OWA: 23/GA5: 30). This says that world is the most *in being* of entities and so is some special sort of entity—so special, in fact, that it is not an entity at all but rather *worlds*.²⁹ From the perspective of the ontological difference, this is unintelligible.

So, world has a rather ambiguous status. Here is how I make sense of that ambiguity. First, I take world to be an entity. It seems plain to me that a network of meanings is something that *is*. Second, I call the being of this entity *worlding* (or, following *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 'world-forming' (FCM: 285/GA29/30: 413)). (In *Being and Time*, Heidegger calls the being of the world, 'worldhood' (SZ: 64), which is a term that emphasises the structure of world rather than the dynamism of its being.) It is worlding, not world, that belongs to Dasein's being as being-in-the-world or disclosing. It is worlding, not world, that is transcendence—or, better, transcending—and worlding, not world, that is for the sake of which

²⁹ While speaking of Nietzsche, Heidegger says the same thing of art: '[I]f art is more in being [*seiender*], then it proves to be the entity most in being [*das Seiendste im Seienden*], the basic occurrence within entities as a whole' (*Nietzsche Volume I: The Will to Power as Art*, 140/*Nietzsche: Erster Band*, 142).

Dasein is. Worlding or disclosing is the for-the-sake-of-which that organises the world. It is Dasein's most fundamental ability-to-be—namely, its projecting, finding, discoursing, and falling. Out of this happening arises an entity: the world, a referential context or framework of meaning. Thus 'world belongs to world-formation. The manifestness of entities as such as a whole, world, forms itself, and world only is what it is in such formation' (FCM: 285/GA29/30: 413). The entity that is thus formed is a special entity, on the basis of which other entities are intelligible and in which Dasein dwells. We might say that this entity is 'more fully in being' than those other entities, but it would be better to say that the world, like Dasein and the work of art, is a distinctive ontic-ontological entity: an entity that has a special relationship with the being of entities.

This special relationship is what makes world, as an entity, of interest to the existential analytic and to the study of being, even as it is also an object of study of anthropology and other ontic sciences. These disciplines focus on the ontic properties of particular worlds and of worlds in general, including how they are structured (i.e., worldhood). In contrast, fundamental ontology and the existential analytic are focused on (Dasein's understanding of) being, which means that they are interested in (i) how world, as an entity, is necessarily implicated in the discovering of entities in their being, and (ii) the worlding or disclosing out of which world arises, which is correlated with the event of being (and which I discuss further in §11). Approaching the latter from the perspective of the former leads to the sorts of ambiguities that we find in Heidegger's discussions of world.

Having determined that world is an entity, it remains to determine in what sense it is concealed. Heidegger says that world is concealed whenever any other entity is uncovered:

If, in our everyday concern with the 'environment', it is to be possible for equipment ready-to-hand to be encountered in its 'being-in-itself', then those assignments and referential totalities in which our circumspection 'is absorbed' cannot become a theme for that circumspection any more than they can for grasping things 'thematically' but non-circumspectively. If it is to be possible for the ready-to-hand not to emerge from its

inconspicuousness, the world *must not announce itself* [[d]as Sich-nicht-melden der Welt]. (SZ: 75)

World does not announce itself when entities are discovered circumspectively because world is a *Woraufhin*: ‘that for which [das Woraufhin] it [sc. Dasein] has let entities be encountered beforehand’ (SZ: 86, insertion mine), and so that ‘from out of which [aus...her] the ready-to-hand is ready-to-hand’ (SZ: 83, translation modified). Hubert L. Dreyfus explains, by appeal to the metaphor of a background:

Woraufhin is an important and difficult technical term, translated as ‘the upon-which’ and also in many other ways in the standard translation [of *Being and Time*]. It refers to the background *on the basis of which*, or to the *structure of the background in terms of which*, things are intelligible.³⁰

(Of course, the official *Woraufhin* in terms of which entities are intelligible is meaning: “Meaning” [Sinn] is the “upon-which” [Woraufhin] of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something’ (SZ: 151, original italicised; cf. SZ: 86, SZ: 324). But ‘meaning’ is just another way of talking about involvement, and so the contexture of meanings is the involvement totality is the world).

Dreyfus’s appeal to a background is a metaphorical appeal to gestalt psychology, which understands perception as involving a perceptual figure or foreground that shows up as set off against a background. As Aron Gurwitsch describes it:

Every mental state has its environment in the sense that what is experienced through it, its noema, has surroundings, a noematic environment, also given in experience. When I apprehend a thing in the mode of the cogito, I grasp it as emerging from a background. Turning to the thing so grasped, and busying myself with it, I am conscious of the

³⁰ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I*, xii. Insertion mine.

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components of this background which, in spite of being set off from my theme, are conjoined with it in a peculiar way. [...] I observe, e.g., the inkwell on my desk. Round about it lie pencils, paper, books, etc.; they are cogiven while I am directed to the inkwell in the mode of cogito: they form the 'objective background' of the inkwell. In this 'objective background' there appear diverse things, among them those just named; but even more: there appears to me through the window part of the front of my neighbor's house. This front also is experienced as a component part of the 'objective background'....³¹

A foreground or figure shows up to us and occupies our attention while set off against a background, on the basis of which it appears. Further, the showing up of entities or the figure in the foreground comes at the expense of the showing up of the background. Thus Maurice Merleau-Ponty:

To see an object is either to have it in the margins of the visual field and to be able to focus on it, or actually to respond to this solicitation by focusing on it. When I focus on it, I anchor myself in it, but this 'pausing' of the gaze is but a modality of its movement: I continue within one object the same exploration that, just a moment ago, surveyed all of them. With a single movement, I close off the landscape and open up the object. The two operations do not coincide accidentally: the contingencies of my bodily organization, such as the structure of my retina, are not what necessitates my seeing the surroundings as blurred if I wish to see the object in focus. Even if I knew nothing about cones and rods, I would still understand that it is necessary to suspend the surroundings in order to see the object better, and to lose in the background what is gained in the figure, because to see the object is to plunge into it and because objects form a system in which one object cannot appear without concealing others.³²

³¹ Gurwitsch, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973), Volume II: Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, 216.

³² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 69–70.

It belongs to the nature of perception that the objects in the background are less perspicuous than the object that is foregrounded—to the extent, even, that Merleau-Ponty speaks of concealment.

The concealment of the world when entities are discovered is analogous to the concealment of the non-thematic background when a foregrounded entity is perceived. What licenses the analogy is that both perceptual background and world are those *on the basis of which* or *in terms of which* entities are discovered and the foreground perceived, respectively. There are, of course, limits to the analogy. We can switch our awareness from the perceptual foreground to the background, whereas we cannot so (easily) switch between entities and world. This difference is due to the fact that the perceptual background is populated by further perceptual objects, which are just like those in the foreground, whereas the world as a background is an entity that, as we have seen, is importantly unlike the entities of circumspective absorption.

To say that the world is backgrounded is, non-metaphorically, to say that it is non-thematic (SZ: 150). To be non-thematic is to be implicitly understood but not explicitly grasped. When entities are discovered, the framework of meaning in terms of which they are meaningful as that and what they are is implicitly understood but not explicitly grasped: ‘the world has already been previously discovered, though not thematically’ (SZ: 83). Or again: ‘the character of understanding as projection is such that understanding does not grasp thematically that upon which it projects—that is to say, possibilities’ or meanings (SZ: 145). Thus, for instance, in discovering the ink well, we *get* that the ink well has to do with ink, pens, writing, and so on, without holding explicit beliefs about this meaningful network of tools, projects, and identities. (Or, rather: many today do *not* get what the inkwell is, and what they are missing is precisely the implicit grasp of the relevant equipmental context.) Insofar as it is grasped non-thematically, world is in some sense hidden from us when we comport towards entities. It is certainly not manifest in the way that the entities in which we are absorbed are manifest. This is a form of concealment.

The non-thematic background of meanings or world can come to the foreground in special experiences—although, even then, it

remains concealed to some extent. In gestalt psychology, foregrounding the background is held to distort its character as a background. To be a background, or a 'thematic field', is to be inherently indeterminate.³³ '[N]o thematic field is entirely unaffected by indistinctness.'³⁴ But foregrounding something makes it distinct or determinate. So, foregrounding the background alters it. So too, bringing the world or the totality of involvements into salience alters it, since it loses its implicit character.

Nonetheless, the world does come into salience sometimes, and it does so in the situation of tool breakdown. When a tool is missing, broken, or in the way, the equipmental context is lit up (SZ: 73-74)—as when an inkwell that does not hold ink well or has no ink in it makes perspicuous that inkwells are for holding ink in which pens can be dipped so that one may write on paper. In this situation, what was in the background comes to the foreground, and we encounter not just the inkwell but what it *means* to *be* an inkwell, in the context of all the other writing implements and the project of being a writer.

The backgrounding of the world is a second-plank phenomenon of *kruptein*. Like tools and skills, world is an entity that functions best when it effaces itself. Further, this concealing is preserving or essential: it is only because discovering entities as that and what they are conceals the world that it can succeed at all. This is to say that when we make sense of entities as meaningful in various ways, we pay heed to those entities rather than their meanings, and this is an essential feature of discovering. We can thus add the backgrounding of the world to the taxonomy as a second-plank form of *kruptein*.

³³ 'Not all items of the thematic field appear in clear distinction from one another. In some way, they fuse and coalesce with, blend and melt into, one another. Items emerging from the otherwise hardly articulated field may still be rather vague and indistinct, present no precise contours, and exhibit little, if any inner differentiation. Admitting of degrees, such vagueness, indistinctness, indetermination may be almost complete, so complete that the pointing reference is to a kind of total diffuse field rather than to definite and determinate items' (Gurwitsch, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973), Volume III: The Field of Consciousness: Phenomenology of Theme, Thematic Field, and Marginal Consciousness*, 327).

³⁴ Gurwitsch, *The Collected Works, Volume III*, 329.

8. Contingent *Kruptein*, and *Kruptesthai*

So far, I have identified a range of different phenomena of second-plank *kruptein*. These are all essential forms of concealing. The world is essentially concealed whenever any entity is discovered. When we successfully discover entities as skills or tools, that discovering necessarily conceals the entity itself, since skills or tools are the sorts of entities that show up most fully as themselves by concealing themselves. Signs, in contrast, are the sorts of entities that conceal that which they are aiming to make manifest, while mysteries and secrets make manifest that which they aim to conceal—and works of art make manifest as ineluctably hidden that which they can never reveal. These concealings are all essential to these entities being the entities that they are and so they are essential to our discovering entities *as* those sorts of entities—or, in the case of the concealing of world, essential to our discovering entities at all. But discovering can also conceal contingently on this plank, primarily in inauthentic discovering and seeming.

First, entities can be discovered in the mode of mere semblance and so under the guise of seeming.³⁵ In this case, the entity shows up or is unconcealed but shows up as what it is not—i.e., with an inappropriate that-being or what-being. Thus ‘bogus gold shows itself as something it is not: it covers up [*verdeckt*], it conceals [*verbirgt*] its what-being, it conceals [*verbirgt*] itself as the entity it actually is’ (ET: 86/GA34: 118). By showing up or being discovered as what it is not, the entity is concealed in its very act of showing up or being discovered, so this is a simultaneous concealing. It is a concealing against which we must constantly fight: ‘It is therefore essential that Dasein should explicitly appropriate what has already been discovered, defend it *against* semblance and disguise, and assure itself of its uncoveredness again and again’ (SZ: 222). Seeming is a constant threat, but it is not essential to discovering per se. No act of discovering necessarily involves seeming (even if

³⁵ For discussions of seeming, see (for example): SZ: 29; OET: 146/GA9: 191; and EM: 110–111/GA40: 79–80.

many such acts, in fact, tend to do so). Seeming is a contingent form of *kruptein*.

Second, inauthentic discovering involves a concealing that is similarly contingent and that similarly calls for constant battle. Inauthentically discovering entities conceals or covers them over by being superficial and inattentive:

That which has been uncovered and disclosed stands in a mode in which it has been disguised [*Verstelltheit*] and closed off [*Verschlossenheit*] by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. Being towards entities has not been extinguished, but it has been uprooted. Entities have not been completely hidden [*verborgen*]; they are precisely the sort of thing that has been uncovered, but at the same time they have been disguised [*verstellt*]. (SZ: 222)

Discovering that is directed by *das Man* and governed by idle talk and curiosity does not genuinely discover the entity as that and what it is, because it takes its lead not from the entity itself but from *how things make sense to us*: how people like us generally make sense of things. The available ways of making sense of things—our ‘common sense’—give us a quick and convenient framework for making entities intelligible but precisely for this reason cut us off from full and deep relations to those entities. We discover entities in a way that is partial, obscuring, or distorted. For example, the ‘common sense’ view that there are precisely two distinct biological sexes obscures phenomena of intersex people, just as a sharp distinction between biological sex and cultural gender obscures transgender people and their experiences. These and similar obscurings or concealings are a form of *kruptein* that can—but need not—inflect our discovering. When they do so, our discovering is inauthentic.

Both when we discover inauthentically and when we discover in the mode of semblance, a further concealing is typically (but not always) involved: the distorting character of the discovering is concealed. Semblance typically does not present itself as semblance but purports to reveal the entity in truth. It conceals its own concealing, leaving us unaware that we are subject to semblance. So too for inauthentic discovering, which covers over its own superficiality

and presents itself as complete and genuine discovering. Heidegger calls this self-concealing of inauthentic discovering's own distorting character, 'ambiguity': '[e]verything looks as if it were genuinely understood, genuinely taken hold of, genuinely spoken, though at bottom it is not; or else it does not look so, and yet at bottom it is' (SZ: 173). If a discovering conceals its own distorting character—conceals the very fact that it is a form of *kruptein*—then it conceals a feature of its own unconcealing. This is thus a second-plank form of *kruptesthai* or self-concealing.

Recall that phenomena of *kruptesthai* conceal the very act of unconcealing itself. In seeming and inauthentic discovering, some feature of the act of unconcealing is concealed, so the unconcealing is concealed only partially. However, at the same time, this unconcealing is almost always concealed from us in its entirety. At the second plank, 'unconcealing' means discovering: letting an entity be meaningful as *x* in comporting towards it. In so comporting, it is not apparent to us that our comporting is unconcealing. Our own acts of unconcealing are not manifest to us as such. In this sense, unconcealing or discovering is itself self-concealing.

So it is not just that we cannot tell whether we are discovering entities well or poorly. It is not apparent to us that we are discovering at all. This is why Heidegger had to write the existential analytic. In writing the existential analytic, Heidegger makes manifest to us that our comporting is discovering. In doing so, he overcomes the concealment produced by the second-plank form of *kruptesthai* that I just discussed and thereby positions it as a *lēthē*₂ antecedent to his own phenomenological uncovering or *alētheuein*. This gives us further phenomena of *lēthē* and *alētheuein* at the second plank.

Let me say the same thing again more slowly. Any act of concealing renders something concealed. If what is thus concealed is then unconcealed, that unconcealing will be an *alētheuein*—an overcoming of *lēthē*. The concealment that arises out of the act of concealing thus comes to count as an instance of *lēthē*. In this case, the act of unconcealing is Heidegger's phenomenological seeing, which makes manifest to him and his readers what is hidden in our comporting—namely, that our comporting is unconcealing. So, Heidegger's phenomenology is an unconcealing that takes as its object the concealment

produced by one form of second-plank *kruptesthai*. In aiming to overcome that concealment, it takes that concealment as a form of *lēthē*. But it is a special sort of *lēthē*, since it is not the original second-plank hiddenness of entities prior to comporting, which I discussed in §4. This *lēthē* comes much later in the story of discovering. According to that story, discovering entities unconceals (*alētheuein*) them by bringing them out of an original obscurity (*lēthē*) and into manifestness (*alētheia*), in such a way that that unconcealing conceals itself (*kruptesthai*) from us but can subsequently come to be unconcealed in a phenomenological seeing (*alēthēuein*₂) that overcomes its concealment (*lēthē*₂).

We find similar phenomena of *lēthē*₂ and *alētheia*₂ subsequent to the other kind of self-concealing I discussed: that of inauthentic discovering. Recall that inauthentic discovering both distorts the entity (*kruptein*) and conceals its own distorting character (*kruptesthai*). It thus produces a double concealment, or two forms of *lēthē*₂ that must be overcome if one is to discover entities authentically. Becoming authentic is thus a two-part process.³⁶ First, one must come to see that inauthentic discovering is distorting. Thus one overcomes its self-concealing (*kruptesthai*), or ambiguity. Then, one must overcome the distorting of inauthentic discovering, by allowing entities to show themselves as they are. Thus one overcomes inauthenticity's other-concealing (*kruptein*). What one has thereby done is overcome two prior concealments (*lēthē*₂) in one's act of authentically discovering (*alētheuein*₂) the entity.

We can thus see that authentic discovering and phenomenological seeing are strictly analogous. Both are forms of unconcealing₂ (*alētheia*₂) that overcome a *lēthē*₂ that was produced by a second-plank *kruptesthai*. This explains why Heidegger thought phenomenology and authenticity in such close proximity and in such similar terms. But we can also pinpoint the difference between the two: they involve different phenomena of *kruptesthai*. In the case of phenomenological seeing, the *kruptesthai* is the self-concealing of discovering's unconcealing character. In the case of authentic discovering,

³⁶ The authentic person must presumably also constantly struggle against the other form of second-plank other-concealing, seeming. See, e.g., IM: 116/GA40: 84.

the *kruptesthai* is the self-concealing of *kruptein*—the self-concealing of the concealing character of inauthentic discovering.

There are surely other phenomena at the second plank. Heidegger himself mentions destruction, the rare, the clandestine, and the inconspicuous (P: 62–3/GA54: 92–4), which might be slotted into the taxonomy. Further, there are empty cells, and we might interrogate whether these are necessarily empty or may be filled, and if the latter, with what. There is more to say (and I shall return to the backgrounding of the world in §13). But for now, the second plank of the taxonomy is sufficiently complete. See Tables 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.

Table 8.1 Concealment (*lēthē*), unconcealing (*alētheuein*), and unconcealment (*alētheia*) at the second plank

Plank	Concealment (<i>lēthē</i>)	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Unconcealment (<i>alētheia</i>)
Two	An entity is not available in comportment	An entity shows up meaningfully as x in comporting towards it (discovering)	Manifestness of the entity as x in comporting (discoveredness)

Table 8.2 Phenomena of self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) and phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē*₂), essential (E) and contingent (C), at the second plank

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē</i> ₂)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein</i> ₂)
Two	An entity shows up meaningfully as x in comporting towards it	The comporting conceals that it uncovers the entity as x (E)	Comporting's uncovering of the entity as x is concealed (E)	Phenomenologising reveals that comporting uncovers the entity (as x) (C)

Table 8.3 Phenomena of other-concealing (*kruptein*), and some phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē₂*), essential (E) and contingent (C), at the second plank

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Other-concealing (<i>kruptein</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē₂</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein₂</i>)
Two	An entity shows up meaningfully as x in comporting towards it	Discovering an entity as x conceals it as y (E)	The entity is concealed as y, etc. (withheld abundance of intelligibility) (E)	–	–
		Discovering an entity as x backgrounds the world (E)	The world is backgrounded (E)	–	The world is revealed in anthropology, etc., or in phenomenology
		Discovering entities such as works of art, secrets, mysteries, signs, tools, and skills conceals (some aspect of) that entity or something else (E)	In entities such as works of art, secrets, mysteries, signs, tools, and skills, something is concealed (E)	–	–
		Discovering in the mode of seeming conceals (some aspect of) the entity (C)	The entity is concealed in seeming, semblance (C)	Discovering in the mode of seeming conceals its concealing of the entity (E)	Authentic discovering reveals the entity (C)
		Inauthentically discovering conceals (some aspect of) the entity (C)	The entity is concealed in inauthentic discovering (C)	Inauthentic discovering conceals its concealing of the entity (ambiguity) (E)	Authentic discovering reveals the entity (C)

Plank One

Speaking

The second plank of unconcealing houses phenomena of concealing and concealment that attend discovering entities as that and what they are. Such discovering is the condition of possibility of the unconcealing at the first plank, which is the unconcealing that occurs in speaking (and, derivatively, writing). (Note that the unconcealing involved in discoursing (*Rede*) belongs at the third plank; see §11.) Paradigmatically, speaking uncovers entities—whether the entity spoken of, some other entity indirectly invoked, or the speaker themselves—in some determinate respect, to an interlocutor.¹ Heidegger often discusses how apophantic statements accomplish this unconcealing. ‘S is P’, for instance, uncovers S in its P-ness, to an interlocutor, communicating to them a predicative determination of the entity (SZ: 154–5, BPP: 209–10/GA24: 298, L: 112–13/GA21: 133–4). For example, ‘She loves you’ (or, *she is in love with you*, S is L) reveals to an interlocutor that some particular person loves them.² It is true to the extent that she does love them and false to the extent that she does not. Working with this simple case, we can identify for its uncovering a prior *lēthē* as well as various forms of *kruptein* and *kruptesthai*.

¹ For more on how language accomplishes this and other forms of uncovering, see my ‘We are a Conversation: Heidegger on How Language Uncovers.’

² The entity revealed here is another case of Dasein rather than a ready-to-hand entity. There are important differences between cases of Dasein and ready-to-hand entities and important differences between comporting towards the former and comporting towards the latter. I do not believe that these differences make a difference to my general account of how speaking about something or someone involves revealing, concealing, and concealment.

9. *Lēthē*

If an apophantic statement such as ‘She loves you’ is unconcealing, then it must be a privation of a prior lack or *lēthē*. On one reading, offered for example by Wrathall and Taylor Carman, this *lēthē* is the lack of predicative determinativeness that characterises our everyday practical and solitudinous comportment.³ In such comporting, entities show up in terms of their instrumental and interpersonal possibilities in the context of our activities and projects. Thus the anonymous ‘she’ offers various possible ways of engaging with her—listening to her, telling her a joke, avoiding her attention, assessing her emotional state, and so on. From the perspective of predicative determination, when she shows up in this manner, she shows up in an unarticulated and vague way. She would show up more clearly, it seems, if she were to show up instead in terms of her definite properties—as a good story-teller, as quick to laugh at a joke, as looking to place blame, or as in love with some ‘you’. The assertion ‘She loves you’ allows her to show up in this more precise way, since it pins her down with a definite character. But this determination is accompanied by a certain loss of the richness and manifoldness of how she appears in practical comporting. According to this line of interpretation, Heidegger expresses this loss by saying that asserting restricts as it makes explicit.⁴ This restriction is the privation of a prior, rich, vague experience of the entity in question, and this vague experience is the *lēthē* that the uncovering in speaking overcomes.

Notice that the *lēthē* that first-plank unconcealing is said to overcome belongs to second-plank unconcealment: the discoveredness

³ See, e.g., Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 19, and Taylor Carman, *Heidegger’s Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time*, 219.

⁴ ‘It is not by giving something a definite character that we first discover that which shows itself—the hammer—as such; but when we give it such character, our seeing gets *restricted* to it in the first instance, so that by this explicit *restriction* of our view, that which is already manifest may be made *explicitly* manifest in its definite character. In giving something a definite character, we must, in the first instance, take a step back when confronted with that which is already manifest—the hammer that is too heavy. In “setting down the subject”, we dim entities down to focus in [*sic*] “that hammer there”, so that by thus dimming them down we may let that which is manifest be seen *in* its own definite character as a character that can be determined’ (SZ: 155; cf. L: 133/GA21: 158).

of the entity in our comporting towards it. This discoveredness counts as a form of *lêthê* only from the perspective of the first plank. Compared to the predicative determination accomplished in speaking, the uncoveredness of entities in comporting provides us with something concealed. Wrathall calls this 'propositional concealment' and explains: 'Concealment reigns in nonassertoric dealing with the world in the sense that, in such pre-predicative comportments, the world is experienced in a way that lacks determinacy, that is, propositional articulation.'⁵ Still, comporting or second-plank discovering has its own unconcealment: 'the richer, more primordial givenness of the world, which is lost in propositional articulation.'⁶

Wrathall attributes the 'richer givenness' of second-plank unconcealing to its practical, perceptual, and prepropositional characters.⁷ His Dreyfus-inspired account has been criticised on many of the same grounds as Dreyfus's own account of discovering as absorbed coping. Not only does characterising the practical in terms of embodied perception draw more from Merleau-Ponty than from Heidegger, but comporting does not seem to be plausibly prepropositional or preconceptual.⁸ Further, while comporting *may* be primarily practical, there is wide disagreement about how speaking is and is not involved in this second-plank discovering and in what sense asserting lies in a restrictive, and so privative, relationship with it.⁹

I agree with critics that second-plank unconcealing is not accurately characterised as perceptual or as prepropositional or preconceptual. I also acknowledge that the relationship between speaking and comporting is very complex, and so that the relationship between first-plank unconcealing and second-plank unconcealing

⁵ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 19.

⁶ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 20.

⁷ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 20ff.

⁸ For a critique of Wrathall and Carman's views along these lines, see chapter 1 of Sacha Golob's *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*. The literature on Dreyfus's views is vast. See, for example, Wrathall and Malpas (eds.), *Heidegger, Coping, and Cognitive Science*. For orientation to Dreyfus's debate with John McDowell about whether experience is conceptual or non-conceptual, see Schear (ed.), *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate*.

⁹ For a discussion of the latter topic that engages with Wrathall's view, see Golob, 'Heidegger on Assertion, Method and Metaphysics'. For a broader discussion, see the extensive literature on the relation between speaking and the present-at-hand.

demands much more attention than I can give it here. But I do think that Wrathall has the right general idea in his account of how discoveredness involves a concealment, *lēthē*, that is overcome in speaking: speaking draws our attention to some particular aspect of the entity that was not in view for us before or was not most salient in our comporting towards the entity. If you are oriented towards someone primarily as a friend, hearing ‘She loves you’ will orient you anew or afresh to her as a lover of you. But, contra Wrathall, this revelatory reorientation and determination can happen in comporting, too. (You can provide your own example here.) What is distinctive of speaking is that I, the speaker, generate this new determinateness for *you*.

Speaking always communicates something *to someone else* (SZ: 155).¹⁰ This other case of Dasein did not previously have access to the entity—either at all (i.e., they did not know the person who loves them) or as described in the speaking (i.e., they did not know that the person loves them, whether at all, still, or again). Thus the *lēthē* that precedes the speaking’s uncovering belongs to the entity in relation to *the hearer* rather than the speaker. Indeed, the speaker must have previously uncovered the entity in comporting towards it: they must have found out that she loves you (BPP: 208/GA24: 296, SZ: 156, L:120/GA21: 143). Otherwise, they could not tell you how she feels (or at least, they should not. If we uncover an entity through speaking in a way that does not at some point stem from comporting towards the entity, then we are talking idly—in this case, gossiping about who loves whom. I discuss idly talking shortly). And while the speaker speaks from an uncovering of the entity in comporting, you the interlocutor need to be, in some respect, in the dark about how she feels in order for the speaker’s speaking to succeed in communicating to you.¹¹

¹⁰ ‘[A]ny discourse is *discourse to others and with others*’ (Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 263). (The term he uses is ‘*Rede*’, but Heidegger is clearly speaking about a first-plank phenomenon of speaking about some entity rather than third-plank disclosing of entities as such and as a whole in discoursing.) There are, of course, cases in which I speak to myself. Some of these are not instances of uncovering and so are not true cases of speaking (e.g., reciting the steps of a recipe as I carry them out). Others are cases of genuine uncovering in which I am in some sense an ‘other’ to myself: self-reporting in therapeutic situations, journaling, self-exhortation, and similar. These cases deserve further analysis.

¹¹ Obviously, this is an oversimplification. Consider the case where you think you lost your love, but you have a suspicion that perhaps she still loves you. The speaker saw her

That first-plank unconcealing in language use requires as its the second-plank unconcealing of comporting towards entities confirms that the latter is the condition of possibility of the former. The second-plank is home to both the prior unconcealing (by the speaker, of her love for you) and the prior *lēthē* (i.e., your not knowing or appreciating that she loves you) that are required for an apophantic statement to successfully uncover an entity for an interlocutor in some determinate way.

10. How Speaking Conceals

We can identify a first phenomenon of *krupstein* at this plank by analogy with that which we found first at the second plank (§4). We saw that, at the second plank, comporting towards an entity discovers it as *x* while concealing it as *y* (where *x* and *y* are suitably opposed). In the same way, an apophantic statement makes some feature of the entity salient while concealing others. In saying ‘This is *x*’, I conceal the entity as *y* (where *x* and *y* are suitably opposed). Heidegger gives a straightforward example from Heraclitus: ‘in Fragment 67: God—war. The word makes the entity manifest. Yet at the same time it also conceals [*verbirgt*], if we stick to this naming taken on its own. For the God is equally “peace”.¹² In a less straightforward way, politicians and spin doctors use and rely on this concealing character of language. For instance, asked about its responsibility for an oil spill, an oil company might respond by stressing its hard work in cleaning up the spill. A statement such as, ‘We are committed to making our waterways clean and safe’ positions the company as environmentally responsible and conscious while covering over its responsibility for the damage.

Further, just like tools and skills, the words, sounds and symbols that we use to communicate about entities work by effacing

yesterday, and she told them what to say, but before they do, you say: ‘I’m sure she still loves me’. You might be genuinely open to her and her continued love for you. But when the speaker says ‘She loves you’, this does not merely repeat what you said but confirms it. This confirmation in some sense completes your own uncovering of her love. There are, of course, other complexities to be considered in this vicinity.

¹² Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymns ‘Germania’ and ‘The Rhine’*, 114/*Hölderlin’s Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*, 127.

themselves. It is through such effacement that meaning can show up: 'when we are explicitly hearing the discourse of another, we proximally understand what is said' (SZ: 164) rather than the words or sounds uttered. Words and sounds typically recede as we focus on the meaning of the utterance (although they can be brought to the fore, for instance in poetry, which I discuss below). They are most salient when we are still learning a language and become increasingly less so as we master its words, sounds, and symbols. In this respect, the words, sounds, and symbols of a language resemble a set of tools more than they do a set of signs (at least, as Heidegger analysed signs in the *Parmenides* lectures). Like tools, words, sounds, and symbols are most present when they conceal themselves. The same applies to language use, which is a skill and so, as we saw, self-effacing.

The words that we use conceal themselves so that meaning may appear, and any predicate conceals those opposed to it. Both are essential forms of *kruptein*. They are forms of *kruptein* because they conceal something other than the speaking's unconcealing, and they are essential because they are necessary to how apophantic statements work to communicate. But there are also contingent forms of *kruptein* at the first plank. We see contingent, simultaneous, other-concealing in any statement saying something about an entity that is deceiving, misleading, or partial. Such speaking may reveal the entity, but it will not reveal it as that and what it is.

The clearest case of contingent *kruptein* at this plank is making false claims. Speaking falsely conceals the entity that it purports to reveal. Thus a false asserting such as 'Pluto never has an atmosphere' purports to reveal Pluto atmosphere-wise but does not. It does reveal Pluto, in the sense that it brings the interlocutor into an uncovering orientation towards it, but it reveals Pluto in a way other than as it is. It is a revealing of an entity that, at the same time, covers over that entity. Such covering over is contingent, since not all speakings are false. Yet it has its own necessity: '*Logos* is not through-and-through true, i.e., uncovering. Rather, it uncovers only insofar as it can also cover-over. [...] The statement can be true (can uncover) at all, only because it can also cover-over' in the way that speaking falsely does (L: 114/GA21: 135). This is to say that the possibility of falsity is necessary or essential to speaking: it belongs to

the apophantic structure of speaking that an inappropriate predicate can be affixed to an entity. When it is so, that is a contingent form of first-plank *kruptein*.

Sometimes, however, Heidegger tries to situate falsity in proximity to *lēthē*. For instance, in the *Parmenides* lectures, he begins his discussion of falsity puzzled as to why the Greeks would speak of falsity as *pseudos* (lie, untruth) rather than as *lēthē* (forgetting) (P: 20ff/GA54: 30ff). If to speak truly is to speak *a-lēthēs*, and if the false is opposed to the true, then surely falsity is a phenomenon of *lēthē* rather than *pseudos*? Or perhaps *pseudos* is itself a phenomenon of *lēthē*? Heidegger claims that '[*p*]seudēs is determined on the basis of “-lēthēs”’ (P: 38/GA54: 56). His argument for this is that *pseudos* is a phenomenon of hiding and so is what it is in relation to a non-hiding (*a-pseudes*), which is connected to the *alēthes* or unconcealed. He concludes that *pseudos* is a legitimate opposite to *alētheia* (P: 33/GA54: 48)—‘the genuine counter-essence to unconcealedness’ (P: 58/GA54: 84). But this simply amounts to saying that *pseudos* is a phenomenon of concealing and so is opposed in some sense to unconcealing. It does not show that it bears any connection to *lēthē*.

Heidegger had in fact rejected a similar argument in *The Essence of Truth*, saying that the argument showed at most that ‘in Plato, and then in a terminologically fixed manner in Aristotle, *pseudesthai* functions as the counter-concept of *alēthēuein*’ (ET: 99/GA34: 137). While this is important for the history of truth, more important is that

the meaning of *pseudos* arose from a quite different fundamental experience to *alētheia*; in any case not the experience of hiddenness [*Verborgenheit*], of concealing [*Verbergen*] (covering up [*Verhüllen*]) and uncovering [*Enthüllen*], for otherwise something of this latter experience would have come to linguistic expression (*lath*-). *Pseudos* as word-form comes from a different stem, as distant as can be from *lēthē* (*lathō*), and does not, like un-truth, have a negative character.

(ET: 96-97 / GA34: 134)

Here, Heidegger acknowledges that *pseudos* is not a phenomenon of *lēthē*. As he later shows, the false is in fact a variant of the true or unconcealed, since it does uncover the entity (P: 30/GA54:45,

P: 44/GA54: 65, P: 132/GA54: 196).¹³ But it would be wrong to conclude that the false is not thereby a phenomenon of concealing. It is one ‘kind of concealedness [*eine Art des Verborgenen*] and concealing [*Verbergens*]’ (P:23/GA54: 33)—and perhaps even ‘the most superficial’ ‘mode of erring’ (OET: 151/GA9: 197): a first-plank, contingent, form of *kruptein*.

All false and deceptive speakings must conceal their deceit in order to be what they are. A manifestly false statement could not deceive unless it covered over its own deceptive character. This is a self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) of the concealing (*kruptein*) character of the talk’s revealing. Heidegger notes the same phenomenon in relation to talking idly: ‘[e]verything looks as if it were genuinely understood, genuinely taken hold of, genuinely spoken, though at bottom it is not’ (SZ: 173). He calls this phenomenon, ‘ambiguity’. It appears, then, that ambiguity is a form of *kruptesthai* and so that the idle talking that it exacerbates should be a form of first-plank *kruptein*, as is speaking falsely.¹⁴ I will argue that it is not but is instead a devious form of *kruptesthai*.

Talking idly is epitomised by talk that uses slogans, formulae, buzzwords, platitudes, and clichés: ‘Men are from Mars, women are from Venus’; ‘Socialism has never worked in practice’; ‘Thinking is thanking’.¹⁵ In such speaking, the meaning that is communicated lies not in a connection to what is spoken about but in the language used (SZ: 168). Even if the same ideas are expressed in longer discursive form, the speaking remains idle if it moves within familiar routes of intelligibility. At most, the speaking serves to solidify social bonds and group membership: ‘The primary relationship-of-being towards the entity talked about is not “imparted” by communication; but being-with-one-another takes place in talking with

¹³ At one point, Heidegger becomes uncertain about this, rejecting the idea that the false is a variant of the true and limiting unconcealing to ‘non-dissembling letting appear’ (P: 66/GA54: 98). For a compelling solution to the problem of whether and in what sense false statements are uncovering, see Carman, ‘Heidegger on Unconcealment and Correctness’.

¹⁴ Note also that although idly talking *qua* inauthentic discovering belongs at the second plank, idly talking *qua* specific instances of speaking is a first-plank phenomenon. As I argue below, however, it is so only in a roundabout way, since it turns out not to be a positive form of *alētheuein*.

¹⁵ The last is from Heidegger, ‘What is Called Thinking?’, 146 / *Was Heisst Denken?*, 151. Of course, it is not Heidegger himself but some of his readers who use this phrase idly.

one another and in concern with what is said-in-the-talk' (SZ: 169). All that is required to understand such talk is facility with what is said—with the meanings already “deposited” in the way things have been expressed' (SZ: 168). One does not need to come into an orientation towards the entity talked about, since the talk is not drawn from or responsive to that entity at all. Talk that is not grounded in the entity talked about cannot be said to uncover that entity.

Falsely speaking uncovers the entity about which it speaks, but not as it is. Idly talking does not uncover the entity about which it speaks. As a result, it is strictly not a form of discovering or *alêtheuein*. Heidegger says that ‘idly talking is a closing-off [*Verschliessen*], since to go back to the ground of what is talked about is something which it *leaves undone*’ (SZ: 169, translation modified). Leaving this undone is failing to uncover the entity. Failing to uncover the entity amounts to leaving it in its *lêthê* rather than actively covering it over. In what sense, then, is it true that idly talking is a covering over? Idly talking covers over the very fact that it is *not* uncovering an entity, and in this way it presents itself falsely as an uncovering. In this sense, idly talking ‘amounts to perverting the act of disclosing [*Erschliessen*] into an act of closing off [*Verschliessen*],’ [f]or what is said is always understood proximally as “saying” something—that is, as uncovering something’ (SZ: 169). In falsely presenting itself as a form of uncovering, idly talking is a form of *kruptesthai*: the simultaneous concealing of an act of uncovering. What makes idly talking a devious form of *kruptesthai* (in the literal sense of ‘devious’: *with a straying course*) is that what it conceals is the *absence* of an act of uncovering.

So far, I have identified two first-plank forms of *kruptesthai*: the concealing in the falsity of speaking falsely, and the ambiguity that presents talking idly as uncovering. There is a third, more general, form of *kruptesthai* at this plank: the self-concealing of first-plank unconcealing itself. The unconcealing at this plank, recall, is the entity showing up in some particular respect, through language use. In speaking, this very showing up is concealed: the unconcealing character of apophantic statements is invisible to the person making them. The *kruptesthai* that conceals the unconcealing nature of

apophantic statements produces a concealment of that nature, which can later come to stand as *lēthē*₂ to an unconcealing₂.

The unconcealing₂ is phenomenological seeing: Aristotle's analysis of the *logos*, or Heidegger's own analysis of asserting. These analyses see and articulate the revealing character of speaking, thus overcoming its concealment (*lēthē*₂). Later, Heidegger will also think that this concealment is overcome in certain types of use of language—especially in poetry. Poetry's poetising reveals the unconcealing character of speaking, thus overcoming its self-concealing: '[T]he poet [...] uses words, not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who must use them up, but rather in such a way that only now does the word become and remain truly a word' (OWA: 25/GA5: 34). We might also think that, in this, poetising overcomes the concealing of the words or symbols themselves, since it draws attention to the sensuous character of the language. If so, poetry would overcome a form of *kruptein* as well as a form of *kruptesthai*. Indeed, we could imagine that it might be poetry, or some form of it, that overcomes the *kruptein* and *kruptesthai*, respectively, of speaking falsely and talking idly, respectively—which would make it an authentic unconcealing₂. Such a use of language would be one that genuinely reveals entities as that and what they are.

We have seen that the *logos*, which is a making manifest or showing (*dēloun*) (SZ: 32), is at the same time 'that way of comporting oneself which can *also cover* [verdecken] *things up*' (SZ: 226). The various ways in which uses of language involve concealing and concealment can be seen in Tables 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3.

Table 10.1 Concealment (*lēthē*), unconcealing (*alētheuein*), and unconcealment (*alētheia*) at the first plank

Plank	Concealment (<i>lēthē</i>)	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Unconcealment (<i>alētheia</i>)
One	An entity does not show up to the interlocutor as x	An entity shows up, through speaking, to the interlocutor as x	Manifestness of the entity as x in speaking (linguistic communication)

Table 10.2 Phenomena of self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) and phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē*₂), essential (E) and contingent (C), at the first plank

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē</i> ₂)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein</i> ₂)
One	An entity shows up, through speaking, to the interlocutor as x	The speaking conceals that it reveals the entity as x (E)	Speaking's revealing of the entity as x is concealed (E)	Phenomenologising or poetising reveals that speaking reveals the entity (as x) (C)

Table 10.3 Phenomena of other-concealing (*kruptein*) and phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē₂*), essential (E) and contingent (C), at the first plank

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Other-concealing (<i>kruptein</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē₂</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein₂</i>)
One	An entity shows up, through speaking, to the interlocutor as x	The speaking conceals the entity as y (E)	The entity is concealed as y (E)	n/a	–
		The speaking conceals the words, sounds, and symbols it uses, while meaning shows up (E)	The words, sounds, and symbols that the speaking uses are concealed (E)	n/a	Poetry unconceals the words, sounds, and symbols that the speaking uses (C)
		Speaking falsely conceals (some aspect of) the entity (C)	The entity is concealed in speaking falsely (C)	Speaking falsely conceals its concealing of the entity (E)	–
		n/a	n/a	Idly talking conceals its not-unconcealing of the entity (ambiguity) (E)	Authentic speaking or poetising reveals the entity (C)

Plank Three

Being and Disclosing, Part I

First-plank unconcealing is using language to say something about some entity and it is made possible by second-plank unconcealing, which is discovering entities in comporting towards them. But the entities we engage with can show up to us as that and what they are only if we are open to such showing up. To engage with whichever entities we engage with, we must be open to entities as such and as a whole. This openness is the unconcealment at the third plank, and the opening that produces it is third-plank unconcealing. I explore this unconcealing and unconcealment in §11, I identify the *lēthē* that it overcomes in §12, and I then proceed to disentangle the various phenomena of *kruptein* and *kruptesthai* at this plank. Identifying third-plank *kruptesthai* is identifying the self-concealing of being.

11. Disclosedness and Disclosing

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger introduces third-plank unconcealment using the language of illumination:

When we talk in an ontically figurative way of the *lumen naturale* in the human being, we have in mind nothing other than the existential-ontological structure of this entity, that it *is* in such a way as to be its 'there'. To say that it is 'illuminated' means that *as* being-in-the-world it is cleared in itself, not through any other entity, but in such a way that it *is* itself the clearing. Only for an entity which is existentially cleared in

this way does that which is present at hand become accessible in the light or hidden [*verborgen*] in the dark. By its very nature, Dasein brings its 'there' along with it. If it lacks its 'there', it is not factually the entity which is essentially Dasein; indeed, it is not this entity at all. *Dasein is its disclosedness.* (SZ: 133)

Dasein is illuminated, cleared, disclosed. Dasein's disclosing illuminates itself and it also illuminates a *there*: a clearing, open, or world within which entities can show up as Dasein comports towards them in second-plank unconcealing. Opening up this clearing is Dasein's *being-there*, being-in-the-world, disclosing, clearing, dwelling, sojourning, or transcending.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger analyses Dasein's disclosing as a unified happening of finding, understanding, discoursing, and falling (SZ: I.V).¹ A case of Dasein *finds* itself called to some particular way to be who it is—say, called to the vocation of teaching. Being a teacher is being able to conduct oneself as a teacher does, relating to entities—students, blackboards, grading, and so on—in a teacherly way. A case of Dasein *understands* itself as a teacher by projecting itself onto this ability-to-be a teacher, which means that it goes about relating to entities as a teacher does (falling). According to public norms, teachers should *find* student work as to-be-graded, blackboards as to-be-written-on, and students as other cases of Dasein to be freed in their being (SZ: 122) through education. Making sense of entities as affording and soliciting these sorts of engagements expresses oneself as a teacher and communicates to others that this is who one is able to be (discoursing). This is what it is to *be* a teacher: to disclose oneself as such. To be a case of Dasein is to be in the business of self-disclosing in this way.

Dasein's self-disclosing as who it is able to be is always at the same time a world-disclosing. Consider that the standards or norms for interacting with entities as such-and-such a person does will at the same time be standards or norms for entities being what they are.

¹ For more on my interpretation of finding, see my 'Finding Oneself, Called.' For more on my interpretation of discoursing, see my 'We are a Conversation: Heidegger on How Language Uncovers.'

For example, if part of what it is to be a teacher is to assess student work, then student work will be that which is to be assessed by the teacher, and anything that meets that standard will count as an instance of student work. So, from the norms governing what it is to be some sort person arise the norms governing what it takes to be certain sorts of entities—that is, the involvements that make up the totality of involvements and give the what-being of ready-to-hand entities. Heidegger puts this by saying that the ability-to-be on which a case of Dasein projects is the *for-the-sake-of-which* that organises the world as a referential context of significance. Self-disclosing as a teacher organises the world of the teacher. Heidegger also puts the point more dynamically, calling the organising of the world as a network of references, ‘signifying’ (*be-deuten*) (SZ: 87). Self-disclosing as a teacher is signifying. This signifying is the worlding of the teacher’s world.² In this way, Dasein’s disclosing is the worlding of the world.

It is also the being of entities. Or rather, Dasein’s disclosing and the being of entities are correlated happenings, which always happen together and which each need the other in order to occur themselves. ‘Worlding’ is an intermediate term that invokes both and can also be identified with either side of the correlation: worlding is Dasein’s disclosing, and worlding is the being of entities. In the remainder of this section, I will argue for these claims. I begin by addressing one immediate objection: Heidegger says that the being of a ready-to-hand entity is its involvement (SZ: 84, 85, 87) and involvements are among the elements that make up the world. This appears to show quite definitively that the being of entities cannot be worlding.

Involvement is the *in order to* and *towards which* of an entity. A student’s essay, for instance, is *in order to be assessed by the teacher as a demonstration of the student’s understanding of and engagement with course material, towards the goal of learning*. Since this *in order to* and *towards which* together give the (rough) definition and

² Heidegger himself says that significance (not signifying) ‘makes up the structure of the world’ (SZ: 87) and that such significance is worldhood (not worlding) or the being of the world. My formulation captures the dynamism of being.

essence of the student essay, it might seem that, together, they are the being of the student essay. They certainly give us what it *means* to be a student's essay—a norm or standard on the basis of which we make sense of things as students' essays. That on the basis of which (*woraufhin*) an entity makes sense is significance (SZ: 143), meaning (SZ: 151, 324), or possibilities (SZ: 145)—and that on the basis of which (*woraufhin*) entities are understood is their being (SZ: 6). So, the being of an entity seems to be its involvement, meaning, essence, or definition.

But, as I have said, meanings, norms, and definitions are entities. Involvements are entities, and they are part of the world, which is itself an entity. It is hard to see how such entities could be the being of an entity without violating the ontological difference. There are also textual grounds for rejecting the normative interpretation of being. Meaning is 'the "upon-which" [*Woraufhin*] of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something' (SZ: 151, original italicised, cf. SZ: 324). If being were meaning, then it would be the 'upon-which' of the projection. But it is (Dasein's) being that is projected (SZ: 143), and Heidegger in fact identifies the upon-which of this projection as what makes care possible (SZ: 324), which we know to be temporality. So, being cannot be meaning. Indeed, being *is* not meaning but *has* meaning: 'this being [implied: *Sein*], as projected upon its "upon-which", is what "really" "has meaning" first of all' (SZ: 324, insertion mine). Finally, collapsing being into meaning makes nonsense of Heidegger's project of finding the meaning of being, as well as his claim that meaning is an existential of Dasein (SZ: 151).

So, what 'is' being? The being (*Sein*) of an entity (*das Seiende*) is whatever happening we note when we use a form of the verb 'to be' (*sein*). When we say of an entity that it *is*, we are flagging that something is happening such that there is an entity there rather than not (i.e., its being *that* it is) and such that the entity is of some sort rather than another (i.e., its being *what* it is). Just as what makes for a dancer is that they are dancing, what makes for something that *is* is is-ing or be-ing. Or again: '[t]he way the singing [*singend*] bird comports itself we call singing [*das Singen*]. The way the extant [*seiend*] being comports itself we call being [*das Sein*]' (BWP: 8/GA35: 10,

translator's insertions). Even when we use the substantive 'being' (*Sein*) to talk about it, being is a verbal, dynamic phenomenon.³

If being is a dynamic phenomenon, then the be-ing of a ready-to-hand entity should be not its involvement but its involving, or *being* involved. This makes intuitive sense and fits well with Heidegger's analysis. What 'makes' something *be* a student's essay is not *in order to be assessed by the teacher as a demonstration of the student's understanding of and engagement with course material, towards the goal of learning* (i.e., the involvement). What 'makes' something *be* a student's essay is that cases of Dasein comport towards it in light of that involvement, *taking* it to be an essay. This is why Heidegger correlates the ready-to-hand entity's involvement with Dasein's freeing of the entity or 'letting it be involved' (SZ: 84). Put crudely, a case of Dasein 'holds' the entity 'up' to the standard of the involvement, assessing the degree to which the entity succeeds or fails in meeting the criteria for counting as a student's essay. This is crudely put insofar as it sounds rather cognitive (and rather like Platonic recollection). For Heidegger, such 'holding up' typically happens not in any explicit judgement (although it can) but in coping with the student's essay as an essay—say, in receiving, reading, grading, and returning it. It is in so comporting towards the student's essay that we take it *as* a student's essay and that it *is* a student's essay. *Being* a student's essay consists in being grasped in light of the relevant involvement: *being* involved. Such being involved is the entity's appearing or presencing as that and what it is.

We can now understand why some who subscribe to a normative interpretation of being tend to say both that norms or meanings *are* the being of entities and that they *give* or *articulate* or *lay out* or *embody* or *specify*, or similar, the being of entities.⁴ The latter is closer to the truth. As norms or meanings, involvements are

³ As we will see, Heidegger frequently does *not* take being as dynamic in *Being and Time*. I argue in my 'Being and the Sea: Being as *Phusis*, and Time' that this is a problem, and in particular that it is the problem that stopped him from completing the missing third division of the text.

⁴ Apparently, it is hard to catch interpreters in the act of saying both explicitly. But Haugeland, for instance, treats being as equivalent to norms, meanings, or constitutive standards while also speaking of constitutive standards as 'introducing' or 'establishing' being (Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, 21, originally published as 'Dasein's Disclosedness', 54).

(like Dasein, although in a very different way) ontic conditions of possibility for the being of entities. To be is to be grasped in light of some involvement, so involvements are necessary, but not sufficient, for an entity to be. Further, since involvements articulate or spell out the standards for counting *as* this or that, they embody or express the essence or definition of various types of entities. Embodying the essence of the student paper is not the same thing as being the *be-ing* of the student paper, which requires a case of Dasein comporting towards an entity in light of the essence embodied in the involvement and the entity thereby showing up as that and what it is. But the involvement is, at least, adjacent to and implicated in the entity's being. If this is right, then an involvement must be that *on the basis of which* (*woraufhin*) entities are in a sense other than that in which being is that *on the basis of which* (*woraufhin*) entities are.

But notice that I have not yet established the conclusion that I set out to establish. I have just argued that the being of an entity is the second-plank unconcealing of it. Yet I was trying to argue that being is *third-plank* unconcealing. Notice now that in his discussion in §18 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger distinguishes two types of letting an entity be involved. The first is the one that I have just discussed: '[o]ntically, "letting something be involved" signifies that within our factual concern we let something ready-to-hand *be* so-and-so *as* it is already and *in order that* it be as such' (SZ: 84). This is discovering in comporting. In *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger calls it 'ontic transcendence' and identifies it with intentionality (MFL: 135/GA26: 170). He argues that it is made possible by an 'original transcendence' (MFL: 135/GA26: 170), which in *Being and Time* he characterises as *ontological* 'letting be involved' (SZ: 85). Ontological letting be involved is not discovering an entity but Dasein's very being-in-the-world (MFL: 135/GA26: 170) or disclosing (SZ: 87). I am going to argue that this ontological letting be involved, or original transcending, is correlated with the being of entities as such and as a whole, and that the two together are third-plank unconcealing.⁵

⁵ Dreyfus's interpretation of Heidegger's distinction in §18 aligns with mine. He takes it as 'the difference between specific coping (ontic transcendence) and world-disclosing

Original transcending is 'the freeing of *everything* [*jedes*] ready-to-hand as ready-to-hand' (SZ: 85). So, while ontic transcending lets some single entity be involved, original transcending lets each and every entity be involved. I say 'entity' rather than 'ready-to-hand entity' because I believe that Heidegger intends the point to be general. He speaks of the ready-to-hand specifically in §18 because he is discussing the work world, but in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* he speaks more broadly of the fact that 'entities are in the "there" of Da-sein in and for Dasein's comportment with entities' (MFL: 136/GA26: 170). So, the point concerns not only ready-to-hand entities but all entities. Indeed, original transcending lets entities be *as a whole*, and 'this "as a whole" [*im Ganzen*] does not only concern those entities we have before us in being occupied with them, for instance; rather all those entities that are accessible in each case, ourselves included, are embraced by this whole' (FCM: 353/GA29/30: 513).

To speak of entities *as a whole* is not to speak of 'the sum-total [*bloÙe Summe*] of entities' or even 'the totality [*Allheit*] of everything in general that in itself is' (FCM: 284–5/GA29/30: 412). It is certainly not to speak of 'the totality of those entities which can be present-at-hand within the world' (SZ: 64). Rather, the wholeness of entities as a whole is the expansiveness of 'that "wherein" a factual Dasein as such can be said to "live"' (SZ: 65). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger uses the image of a workshop to illustrate the type of wholeness that he has in mind (SZ: 84).⁶ For a little variety (but only a little), let me substitute a classroom. A classroom is earlier than any item of equipment discovered in it (SZ: 84). In order to uncover, say, a blackboard to write on or an in-class activity to

background coping (originary transcendence)' (Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 107). He also suggests, intriguingly, that this distinction is 'the original version of the famous *ontological difference*' (Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 107). Steven Crowell argues that the distinction is the basis of Heidegger's philosophical break from Husserl (Crowell, *Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger*, 70).

⁶ In *The Beginning of Western Philosophy*, Heidegger uses the image of a plant to make his point: 'But if, for example, we carefully take apart and lay out "everything" that pertains to a plant, viz., root, stalk, leaves, blossoms, and if we omit nothing, then does all this together give us "the plant"? No; something is still missing. The whole of the plant does not result from thrusting together all the pieces but is on the contrary *prior* to all the components, even if these are not expressly present at hand but are, e.g., still in the bud or in the seed grain' (BWP: 4/GA35: 4).

assign, the classroom must already be there in advance as the context or setting within which blackboards and in-class activities make sense as tools to be used in educating. In different settings these would show up intelligibly as different sorts of things—as stock to be sold, or as a pedagogical innovation to be shared. What changes as the context changes is not any particular arrangement of space but the system of meanings associated with it. What differentiates a classroom from a supply store is that in the former, things *can* show up as *blackboard to write on*, whereas in the latter, they can only show up as *stock to sell and purchase*. (This is why writing on a blackboard in a supply store could only ever amount to testing out the merchandise and could never be an exercise of pedagogy. The latter would require that the supply store become a classroom, in which case one is no longer writing on a blackboard *in a supply store*.) The ways in which things *can* show up is a set of interconnected possible ways for entities to be, which is a totality of involvements. Thus the classroom, or the workshop, is a miniature world and a way of illustrating the world as a totality of involvements that must be illuminated before any particular entity can be (SZ: 84): ‘The previous disclosure of that for which what we encounter within-the-world is subsequently freed, amounts to nothing else than understanding the world—the world towards which Dasein as an entity always comports itself’ (SZ: 86).⁷

It can seem odd to think of the world as a totality of entities. I suggest that it is such a totality in that it is a totality of *types* of entities—or rather, as I said, various ways that entities *can be*.⁸ It is a possibility space, akin to a Kuhnian ‘disciplinary matrix’ or a conceptual schema.⁹ (Heidegger himself describes the world as such as ‘the *possibility* of the ready-to-hand in general [*überhaupt*]’ (SZ: 187),

⁷ Treating ‘totality of involvements’ and ‘world’ as roughly synonymous is a little crude, since the world also includes standards for that-being (e.g., for being ready-to-hand) and a for-the-sake-of-which, which is a possibility of Dasein’s being. But when he is thinking of the world as that which is presupposed by our comporting towards entities, Heidegger does tend to think of it as primarily a totality of involvements.

⁸ For a different reading, based on a different interpretation of the distinction between ontic letting be and ontological letting be, see Leslie MacAvoy, ‘The Space of Meaning, Phenomenology, and the Normative Turn’, 43.

⁹ Thomas S. Kuhn, ‘Postscript—1969’ in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 181f.

and in terms of ‘whatever entities it [sc. Dasein] is *able* to comport itself toward’ (OEG: 121/GA9: 157).) In the world of the educator, for instance, things can be blackboards—or rather, *in orders to write on so that students can see what is written*. This involvement is not an actual blackboard but the standard or criterion for counting as a blackboard. As such, however, it is in some sense the ideal, paradigmatic, abstracted, or generic blackboard. Which of these it is, and why, I do not know. But thinking of involvements in this way makes it easier to think of the world, *qua* totality of involvements, as a totality of entities.¹⁰

Heidegger also sometimes calls the totality of entities, or entities as a whole, ‘*phusis*’: ‘[e]ntities as a whole reveal themselves as *phusis*, “nature”, which here does not yet mean a particular sphere of entities but rather entities as such as a whole, specifically in the sense of upsurgent presencing’ (OET: 145/GA9: 189–190; cf. IM: 17/GA40: 12, FCM: 31/GA29/30: 47). By speaking of ‘upsurgent presencing’, however, Heidegger moves from entities as a whole to their being or appearing. Indeed, he frequently uses the term ‘*phusis*’ in a way that crosses the ontological difference: ‘*Phusis*, that which prevails [*das Waltende*], means not only *that which itself prevails* [*das Waltende selbst*] [i.e., entities], but that which prevails in its prevailing [*das Waltende in seinem Walten*] [i.e., entities as such] or the *prevailing* of whatever prevails [*das Walten des Waltenden*] [i.e., being]’ (FCM: 30/GA29/30: 46, my insertions); ‘entities as a whole’ *qua* ‘the “self-forming prevailing of entities as a whole” [*>sich selbst bildenden Walten des Seienden im Ganzen<*]’ (FCM: 25/GA29/30: 38–9) or ‘the general prevailing of entities’ (FCM: 26/GA29/30: 39).¹¹ As the prevailing of entities, ‘[*p*]husis is the event of *standing forth*’ (IM: 16/GA40: 12) and so the appearing or presencing of entities—‘the being of entities’ (IM: 19/GA40: 14). The manifesting of entities as such and as a whole is the *being* of entities, or *phusis*—which should be, in participle form, *phuon*.

¹⁰ The world is also a totality of entities in a more banal sense: it is a totality of involvements and involvements are entities.

¹¹ Sometimes, Heidegger uses ‘*phusis*’ to refer to beingness: ‘*phusis* in the sense of *ousia*, the essentiality [*Wesenheit*] of entities as such’ (FCM: 33/GA29/30: 50).

Entities as a whole, as *phusis*, can be only if they are *let be* in original transcending (SZ: 85; MFL: 135/GA26: 170; OEG: 123/GA9: 159). Original transcending is Dasein's projecting itself onto an ability-to-be (and finding and discoursing), which accomplishes the 'signifying' that we saw to constitute the worlding of the world (SZ: 87). This disclosing is the letting be that allows *phuon*, the manifesting of entities as a whole. Only on the basis of this original letting be and manifesting can entities be discovered in second-plank unconcealing or comporting (SZ: 84, MFL: 136/GA26: 170). Thus we can see how to respond to the worry that the being of entities is their being involved and not, as I have claimed, worlding. The being of *an* entity is its being involved (in ontic transcending), whereas the being of entities *as a whole* is worlding, or original transcending.¹² The latter occurs in correlation not with Dasein's discovering but with Dasein's disclosing. This disclosing, together with the being of entities as a whole, is third-plank unconcealing.

It is, however, a little odd to say that entities as a whole prevail when a case of Dasein takes up the identity of being, for instance, a teacher. This projecting does allow the totality of *educational* entities to prevail for that case of Dasein, but our philosophical account of the third plank should be more general. To get to the right level of philosophical generality, we should be speaking of Dasein's disclosing *as such*, the worlding of the world *as such*, and the being of entities as a whole *as such*.

To think of entities as a whole *as such* is to think 'the totality of entities as such with an eye to their most universal traits'¹³—that is, with an eye to 'that which pertains to every entity as an entity, to every *on* insofar as it is an *on*' (FCM: 43/GA29/30: 65). This way of thinking brings us to 'the *essence* and *nature* of entities'

¹² It is because *phusis* as the overwhelming sway names entities' presencing collectively rather than individually that I do not share Dreyfus and Kelly's interpretation of it as the 'whooshing up' of an individual entity (Dreyfus and Kelly, *All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age*, 200ff; cf. Sean D. Kelly, *The Proper Dignity of Human Being*, Chapter 5). (Capobianco has a similar view: he equates *phusis* with being as the appearing of particular entities (see, e.g., *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 50ff).) While it may be true that individual entities emerge into appearing and then sink back into concealment, that is a second-plank phenomenon.

¹³ Heidegger, 'Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?"', in *Pathmarks*, GA9: 378.

(FCM: 43/GA29/30: 65), or to their beingness (*Seiendheit*), in the sense of the ontological categories that apply to every entity *qua* entity (e.g. NIV: 41/GA6.2: 78). What belongs to every entity just insofar as it is an entity is that it shows up meaningfully in comporting. Entities appear, or presence. If the entity *as such* is what appears, then 'entities *as a whole* and *as such*' will name entities as a whole appearing—not the appearing of all entities but the appearing of entities *at all*. It is this totality, as such, that we invoke when we wonder why there are entities at all rather than nothing: '[I]n the question [of why there are entities rather than nothing], we keep ourselves completely removed from every particular, individual entity as precisely this or that entity. We do mean entities as a whole, but without any particular preference' (IM: 4/GA40: 3). We mean entities such that 'outside of this one, the entity [sc. entities as a whole, as one; *das Seiende im voraus ganz, es als dieses Eine*], there is no other, unless it be the nothing [*das Nichts*]' (NII: 194/GA6.1: 412, translation modified).¹⁴

Similarly for worlding as such: it is the happening not of any particular world, such as the world of the educator, but the worlding of any world at all, rather than not. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger calls this 'world-forming' (FCM: 274/GA29/30: 397), which he again attributes to Dasein's disclosing (FCM: 362/GA29/30: 527).

Dasein's disclosing as such is its self-disclosing as a case of Dasein. This has the same structure as disclosing oneself as a teacher or some other sort of person, although it is a more essential happening. Dasein finds itself called to be a sense-maker (finding), projects itself forward into going about as a sense-maker does (understanding), goes about making sense of entities (falling), and thereby puts itself forward to others and is acknowledged by them as a sense-maker (discoursing). It is the unified happening of finding, understanding, discoursing, and falling.

¹⁴ In full the passage reads: 'What is the entity? What is meant by *the* entity, neither some particular entity nor a group of entities nor even all of them taken together, but something essentially more: what is meant is the whole, the entity taken as a whole from the outset, the entity taken *as such* unity. Outside of this one, the entity, there is no other, unless it be the nothing' (NII: 193–4/GA6.1: 411–12, translation modified).

So, third-plank unconcealing is the worlding of the world, which is also Dasein's disclosing and the being of entities as a whole. It issues in third-plank unconcealment, which is the clearing or there, and which Heidegger calls 'ontological truth' (in contrast to the ontic truth of second-plank unconcealment) (OEG: 103–4/GA9: 131). We can think third-plank unconcealing as it occurs in each case or in its occurring *as such*, rather than not. It is the latter that we must consider in order to identify the phenomenon of *lêthê* prior to the unconcealing at this plank.

12. *Lêthê*

Third-plank unconcealing overcomes a prior concealment: '[p]h^usis is the event of *standing forth*, arising from the concealed' (IM: 16/GA40: 12). This prior concealment is *lêthê*, which makes third-plank unconcealing a form of *alêtheuein*. (Third-plank unconcealment is, in fact, the most primordial form of *alêtheia* (SZ: 220, OET: 146/GA9: 190).) The *lêthê* that is purportedly conceptually and ontologically prior to the being of entities as such and as a whole is the nothing with which such appearing is contrasted. It is the non-operating of Dasein's disclosing, or the non-worlding of the world: the non-being of entities as such and as a whole.¹⁵

Heidegger describes third-plank *lêthê* in his interpretation of Plato's myth of Er: '*lêthê* as essential withdrawing [*Entziehen*] and concealing [*Verbergen*] never lets anything emerge, and hence it sets itself against all coming forth, i.e., against *ph^usis*. The field of *lêthê* prevents every disclosure of entities, of the ordinary. In the essential place of *lêthê* everything disappears [*verschwinden*]' (P: 118–19/GA54: 176). This place of *lêthê*, however, is not something that Dasein directly experiences. As essentially disclosing or illuminating—as *Da-sein*,

¹⁵ Thus I disagree with Wrathall, who identifies third-plank *lêthê* with the concealment or absence of a particular (type of) entity's way of being—such as the absence of *the element with the atomic number 79* in the medieval world. This absence means that '[t]he entity cannot under any circumstances be uncovered because there is no place for it in the world we inhabit' (Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 25). This is the concealment of an entity rather than being and it is a second-plank phenomenon.

being-there—a case of Dasein can never be in a condition of non-disclosing. But we can encounter this *lēthē* in various liminal experiences. As Heidegger goes on to say regarding the myth of Er: ‘the “away” of the withdrawn [*Entzogen*] comes to presence [*weset*] itself in the essence of the withdrawal [*Entzug*]’ (P: 119/GA54: 176).

Third-plank *lēthē* shows up to us as the ‘nothing’ in the mood of angst (in ‘What is Metaphysics?’ but not in *Being and Time*) and in the question, ‘Why are there entities at all rather than nothing?’ (IM: 1/GA40: 12, cf. WM: 96/GA9: 122, H: 120/GA55: 159). As Heidegger insists in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, this ‘rather than nothing’ is not a mere addendum, added perhaps for rhetorical effect (IM: 26/GA40: 19). Rather, it is crucial for getting entities as a whole into view. Asking this ‘why’ question puts entities as a whole and as such in question, which means that we get everything that is or could be discovered in view and ask: why is it like this rather than not? ‘Like this’ invokes the disclosed world and third-plank unconcealing and ‘rather than not’ contrasts that to an alternative *lēthē*. In this alternative, we glimpse the darkness and non-intelligibility—the nothing—that would have obtained in the absence of third-plank unconcealing, which is the *lēthē* presupposed by disclosing.

This *lēthē* also shows up to us, indirectly, in the condition of the animal. This might come as a surprise, since Heidegger holds that the animal is not worldless but world-poor and world-poverty seems to allow the animal a certain kind of worlding or disclosing—just not one that is as rich as Dasein’s. But this is not what Heidegger argues. (Many people do not find Heidegger’s analysis of animality plausible, but I leave that aside). In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger argues that animals possess analogues to Dasein’s second-plank discovering and third-plank disclosing. First, the animal has some access to entities—not to entities *as* there, rather than not, and *as* what they are, rather than some other thing, but to stimuli that release certain instinctual drives (FCM: §59/GA29/30: §59). Second, this is made possible by a more fundamental openness—not to entities as a whole and as such (world), but to a suite of potential behavioural triggers, which Heidegger calls a ‘disinhibiting ring’ (FCM: 255/GA29/20: 370–1). This disinhibiting

ring is analogous to Dasein's world but it is a poor substitute for it. Possessing this poor substitute is what makes the animal world-poor or deprived of world (FCM: 195/GA29/30: 287). The animal's poverty in world is 'a *not-having of world in the having of openness for whatever disinhibits*' (FCM: 270/GA 29/30: 392). The animal's not having-of world is based on a comparison with Dasein's having of world, which is to say that it is reached through a privative interpretation (SZ: 50, 58), in which we subtract from ourselves our distinctive disclosing and consider what remains. When we attempt to think the absence of disclosing, we are attempting to think the darkness that obtains when disclosing does not—the 'rather than nothing' that is opposed to entities as a whole and as such, or world, that is opened up by disclosing. This is *lēthē*. Thus by positing the animal as deprived of world, in comparison to our world-forming, we situate the animal in a condition of *lēthē*.

We might wonder whether the animal's condition of *lēthē* is the same as that which is presupposed by Dasein's disclosing. Giorgio Agamben thinks that it is, in the sense that one and the same *lēthē* belongs to the animal and is overcome by Dasein's unconcealing.¹⁶ He takes this overcoming to be a genesis of Dasein from the animal. While introducing the notion of genesis is problematic, the first step of Agamben's argument appears to be correct: the claim that the *lēthē* presupposed by Dasein's unconcealing is the same as the *lēthē* of the animal's world-poverty. This claim is correct, however, only with an essential qualification: to say that two things are the same is not necessarily to say that they are numerically identical. They might instead be of the same sort or kind. Dasein's openness presupposes a *lēthē* that is of the same sort as the *lēthē* that characterises the animal but it does not follow that its *lēthē* is the animal's *lēthē*.

Indeed, there is good reason to think that it is not. The animal's *lēthē* is paired with the openness of the disinhibiting ring, which allows a certain access to entities. Such openness does not presumably accompany the *lēthē* that is presupposed by Dasein's disclosing. There is, of course, room for argument here—particularly if we

¹⁶ Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, 68.

think that cases of Dasein are necessarily human beings, since human beings are animals. I do not want to press the point. But I do want to conclude, first, that the *lēthē* presupposed by unconcealing need not be that of animality, and second, that the two are nonetheless the same sort of *lēthē*, such that in thinking the animal as world-poor, we have some access to that *lēthē* that our disclosing overcomes.

So, we can glimpse *lēthē* in the condition of the animal and we can experience our *lēthē* itself liminally in a mood such as angst. In both cases, however, we can at most only graze this non-intelligibility. For, as disclosing or illuminating, we destroy the darkness as soon as we encounter it.¹⁷ (More on this in §22.) Left to itself, third-plank *lēthē* allows no illuminating, no disclosing, no worlding of the world. The understanding of being is not operative. '[E]verything disappears' (P: 119/GA54: 176) in this darkness—or rather, since darkness presupposes light, in this absence of both darkness and light.

This third-plank *lēthē* is not a phenomenon of earth. This, despite the fact that Heidegger positions earth as a phenomenon of *lēthē* in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' and commentators follow him in doing so.¹⁸ Heidegger situates earth as the ground or source out of which world arises (OWA: 32/GA5: 42), just as *lēthē* is the concealment that third-plank unconcealing, or worlding, overcomes. And, just as *alētheia* 'suspends' or 'cancels' *lēthē* (P: 14/GA54: 20), so too world 'strives to surmount' earth because 'it will tolerate nothing closed [*Verschlossenes*]' (OWA: 26/GA5: 35). Yet earth is never overcome by world, as *lēthē* is by *alētheuein* and its alpha-privative. Instead, world lets earth come forth: 'In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth. [...] The work moves the earth into the open of

¹⁷ This is the paradox of the nothing that Heidegger encounters in 'What is Metaphysics?': 'In our asking we posit the nothing in advance as something that "is" such and such; we posit it as an entity. But that is exactly what it is distinguished from. Interrogating the nothing—asking what and how it, the nothing, is—turns what is interrogated into its opposite. The question deprives itself of its own object' (WM: 85/GA9: 107).

¹⁸ For instance, Thomson: truth 'takes place' as 'an "*a-lētheic*" struggle to "dis-close" or "un-conceal" (*a-lētheia*) that which conceals (*lēthē*) itself, an "essential strife" between two interconnected dimensions of intelligibility (revealing and concealing) which Heidegger calls "world" and "earth"' (Thomson, 'Heidegger's Aesthetics').

a world and holds it there' (OWA: 24/GA5: 32). This openness, however, does not suspend or cancel earth's concealedness: 'The earth is essentially self-secluding [*Sichverschließend*]. To set forth the earth means: to bring it into the open as the self-secluding' (OWA: 25/GA5: 33). Further, Heidegger insists that we hear 'setting forth' (*herstellen*) 'in the strict sense of the word' (OWA: 24/GA5: 32): *setting up*, in the sense of *establishing* or *producing*. If it is produced, established, or set up in its engagement with world, then earth cannot precede world, as *lêthê* does *alêtheia*, but comes to 'be' along with it.¹⁹ So, earth cannot be third-plank *lêthê*.

Heidegger's dynamic description of earth—or, better, earthing—as self-secluding actually sounds like an account of a phenomenon of *kruptesthai*. I argued earlier that *kruptesthai*, as essential self-concealing, is sheltering, and Heidegger says of earth that '[a]s the sheltering and concealing [*Bergende*], [...] earth tends always to draw the world into itself and to keep it there. [...]T]he opponents raise each other into the self-assertion of their essences' (OWA: 26/GA5: 35). Yet notice that what earth is sheltering here is *world*, not earth. The passage I quoted in the previous paragraph does say that earth is *self-secluding*, but it is unclear what this could mean. Further, when I discussed second-plank earthing in §4, it showed itself to be a form of *kruptein*. If there is a third-plank version of earthing, should this not also be a phenomenon of *kruptein* rather than of *kruptesthai*? The only way to settle the matter is to identify third-plank phenomena of *kruptein* and *kruptesthai*.

We might be tempted to say that we have already identified a phenomenon of *kruptesthai*—*lêthê*! It might seem that *lêthê* is a condition that being puts itself into, in an act of self-forgetting or self-obliterating (*lanthanein*). But if *lêthê* is what is prior to and wholly other than being, then it cannot be a condition that being puts itself into, for it is not a condition of being at all. There may be a subsequent phenomenon of *lêthê*₂ at the third plank, but to identify that, we need first to identify third-plank *kruptesthai*.

¹⁹ Melayna Schiff makes this point in 'The Dynamic of Being: Making Sense of Heidegger on the Relationship of "World" and "Earth"' (unpublished manuscript).

13. Un-truth and Falling

Third-plank concealing and concealment first became major themes for Heidegger in 'On the Essence of Truth' (1930), which contains a specific and detailed account of how concealing belongs to the happening of truth as *alêtheuein*. This text thus seems like a good place to start seeking third-plank phenomena of *kruptesthai*. Heidegger begins by grounding truth as correctness in comporting towards entities (discovering, letting an entity be), which he in turn grounds in original transcending (disclosing, letting entities as such and as a whole be), which he terms 'freedom' (OET: 144/GA9: 188). Heidegger notes that when original transcending occurs, it does so in such a way that concealing is essentially involved. He calls this concealing 'un-truth', and it is '[t]he concealment of entities as a whole [[*d*]ie *Verborgenheit des Seienden im Ganzen*]' (OET: 148/GA9: 193)—that is, the concealment of world. This concealing occurs whenever originary transcending lets entities as such and as a whole be. In other words: when worlding takes place, world is concealed.

The reason for this essential concealing is that 'letting-be always lets entities be in a particular comportment that relates to them and thus discloses them' (OET: 148/GA9: 193). Heidegger does not explain why the fact that originary transcending (disclosing, worlding) always takes place in ontic transcending (discovering, comporting) means that the world must be concealed, but I think that the explanation is something like the following. Originary transcending lets entities as such and as a whole be; worlding lets world be. Were this to be the whole story, then the world would be manifest as any other entity is. But because originary transcending always takes place in ontic transcending, it is always simultaneous with some ontic letting be, in which an entity is (or rather, many entities are) manifest as that and what it is (or, they are). We know that an entity is made manifest as that and what it is by being held up to the relevant standard given by the world, and we know that when this happens the entity is manifest but world, as that in terms of which it is manifest, is backgrounded. So, while in originary transcending world is let be and made manifest, in ontic transcending it is backgrounded. And because the former always occurs in the latter,

world is only ever made manifest as backgrounded. This is what makes it such a distinctive entity.

We can also see why the backgrounding of the world, which I discussed earlier as a second-plank phenomenon of *kruptein*, shows up again at the third-plank. This phenomenon occurs twice in the taxonomy because of the distinctive fact that third-plank unconcealing, *qua* worlding, is the being of the world. Since the concealing of the world is essential to what it is, it belongs to its being. It belongs to worlding that, when it occurs, something else is concealed—namely, the world. This is thus a third-plank form of *kruptein*. The same phenomenon can be addressed from the perspective of either the second plank (world as an entity is concealed *in discovering*) or the third plank (*worlding* requires that world be concealed). In neither case, however, is the backgrounding of the world the self-concealing of being, since what is concealed is an entity (world) and its concealing is thus a form of *kruptein* rather than *kruptesthai*.

This concealing is also not a form of *lēthē*, although the fact that it is called ‘untruth’ might suggest that it is. ‘Un-truth’ has the same sort of privative formulation as *alētheia*, which might suggest that it names the opposite of truth as *alētheia*: *lēthē*. But that the worlding of the world conceals the world is not a prior concealment that unconcealing overcomes, even if it does always take place in ontic transcending or discovering. Rather, Heidegger calls this concealing ‘untruth’ in order to stress that it is essential to unconcealing or the happening of truth at the third plank. He puts this by saying that the concealing of the world is ‘older even than letting-be itself’ (OET: 148/GA9: 194). It is older than ontic letting be (‘every openedness of this or that entity’ (OET: 148/GA9: 193–4)) in the sense that it is the condition of possibility of it. It is older than ontological letting be in that it belongs to it essentially, as part of what it already was (*to ti ēn einai*).

There is, however, a phenomenon of *lēthē* in the vicinity—along with two other phenomena of concealing. Heidegger points out that we do not notice the concealing of the world as it worlds, and he calls this ‘the mystery’: ‘the concealing [*Verbergung*] of what is concealed as a whole [*des Verborgenen im Ganzen*], of entities as

such, [is...] the mystery [*das Geheimnis*]' (OET: 148/GA9: 194).²⁰ Of course, *what* is concealed as a whole has no need to be concealed again. What Heidegger presumably meant to say is that the *concealing* of what is concealed is concealed. He corrects himself in the next paragraph: 'concealing [*Verbergung*] appears as what is first of all concealed [*Verborgene*]' (OET: 148/GA9: 194). This is the fact that, in our comporting, we do not pay heed to the fact that world is a concealed condition of possibility of our sense-making. The concealing of the concealed world is essential to how unconcealing works, which is why the mystery is the 'proper non-essence of truth' (*das eigentliche Un-wesen der Wahrheit*) (OET: 148/GA9: 194). This is an essential form of self-concealing or *kruptesthai* at the third plank.

Were world to be uncovered as a phenomenon, this uncovering would be a form of *alētheuein* that overcomes a prior concealment or *lēthē*. So, the mystery, as a form of third-plank self-concealing, can in principle produce a concealment that is a third-plank *lēthē*₂. (The mystery is not itself a form of *lēthē*, since it is a *concealing* rather than a *concealment*.) This *lēthē*₂ is the concealedness of the world in ordinary comportment, which is overcome presumably by a specifically philosophical-phenomenological attending to it, of the sort that Heidegger himself carries out. But the possibility of this unconcealing is complicated by a further phenomenon of concealing.

Instead of being recollected, the mystery might 'disavow itself in and for forgottenness' (OET: 149/GA9: 195), concealing itself. This third moment of concealing conceals the concealed world. Rather than phenomenologically recollecting that which is concealed, Dasein flees from the mystery and in this flight flees *towards* entities. It 'holds fast to what is offered by entities' (OET: 150/GA9: 196) and is absorbed in them (cf. SZ: 175). Being absorbed by entities discovered is called 'erring' (*Irren*), while discovering those entities is 'in-sisting' (as opposed to 'ek-sisting', or disclosing) (OET:

²⁰ Note that, if this mystery is a form of *kruptesthai*, then it will be disanalogous to second-plank, ontic mysteries, which are forms of *kruptein*. Further, the latter *show up* as concealing something (§6) whereas the former does not.

150/GA9:196). Discovering entities is second-plank unconcealing, and it takes place in particular comportings towards entities. Erring does not: ‘our *being absorbed*, which lets Dasein find itself in the midst of entities and pervasively attuned by them (though never without the unveiling of world), is likewise not a *comportment* towards entities’ (OEG: 129/GA9: 168). Being absorbed, or erring, is a general orientation *towards* entities discovered in second-plank discovering and *away* from the concealed concealing of the world. As such, it covers over the concealings through which third-plank unconcealing operates. ‘[E]rrancy holds sway’ ‘[i]n the simultaneity of disclosure [*Entbergung*] and concealing [*Verbergung*]’ (OET: 151/GA9: 198), in the sense that we are absorbed in entities (i.e., err) because world is necessarily backgrounded (i.e., because of the concealing) in the operation of third-plank unconcealing (i.e., disclosing). This makes erring a form of third-plank *kruptesthai*. Heidegger calls it the *counteressence* (*Gegenwesen*) to truth (OET: 150/GA9: 197).

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger calls being absorbed in entities ‘falling’. Falling absorption is an existentiale (SZ: 176, cf. 179), which makes it different from falling *qua* inauthentic disclosing (which I discuss in §16). Because of the ways in which he entangles the two phenomena of falling, Heidegger does not say much about falling *qua* absorption, and he certainly does not position it as a flight from the mystery, as he does in ‘On the Essence of Truth’. But falling is clearly the precursor to erring, since it names the fact that ‘Dasein is proximally and for the most part *alongside* the “world” of its concern’ (SZ: 176), wrapped up in the entities that it has discovered and not attending to the doubly-concealed world that makes this possible, much less to the third-plank unconcealing that allows the world to show up as concealed and then allows that concealing to be concealed.

What *Being and Time* is more clear about, however, is the way in which in-sisting and erring lead Dasein, as the disclosing entity, to conceal itself—the way in which ‘in-sistent ek-sistence adroitly forgets and mistakes itself’ (OET: 150/GA9: 196–7). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explains that when Dasein turns towards entities or ‘falls into the world’, it at the same time ‘falls away from itself’ (SZ: 175),

concealing itself from itself. This self-concealing is a self-distancing and a self-misunderstanding. Heidegger describes it in terms of ontic and ontological proximity:²¹

Thus because Dasein is ontico-ontologically prior, its own specific state of being [*Seinsverfassung*] (if we understand this in the sense of Dasein's 'categorical' structure ['*kategorialen*' *Struktur*]) remains concealed [*verdeckt*] from it. Dasein is ontically 'closest' to itself and ontologically farthest; but pre-ontologically it is surely not a stranger. (SZ: 16)

What is concealed from Dasein is the 'categorical' structure of its being as disclosing. Of course, Heidegger will go on to reserve the language of the categories for entities that are unlike Dasein and to introduce a new term for the corresponding structures of Dasein: existentialia (SZ: 44). Here, he is using the term 'categorical' to describe Dasein's own structure—which is to say, its *Seinsverfassung*: 'By "existentiality", we understand the state of being [*Seinsverfassung*] that is constitutive for those entities which exist' (SZ: 13). Dasein's state of being or its existential structure is primarily care, as being-ahead-of-itself-already-in-a-world-amidst-innerworldly-entities (SZ: 202). But it is also (what is the same thing) being-in-the-world (e.g. SZ: 53), as well as being-in (e.g., SZ: 55) and being-with (e.g., SZ: 121) and all the other existentialia. That this structure is concealed from Dasein makes it ontologically far from itself.

The reason that Heidegger gives for this ontological distance is that Dasein has an ontico-ontological priority over other entities

²¹ See SZ: 311 for an explicit connection between Dasein's ontological distance and falling. Sheehan also connects this ontological distancing with falling: '[T]he more I focus on the meaningful, the more I forget that I am the thrown-open clearing that makes meaning possible and necessary. This is what *Being and Time* means by "fallenness" (*das Verfallen*), which is the quite ordinary fact of overlooking the clearing despite the fact that "what is closest [= the clearing] is the farthest, and what is farthest [= meaningful things] is closest" [BQP: 74 / GA45: 82]. The clearing is "the innermost fire of human ex-sistence" [Heidegger, *Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, 16 / Heidegger, *Aristoteles: Metaphysik IX, 1-3: Vom Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft*, 20], just as meaning is the invisible air I breathe, absent which I would be dead' (Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 116. The first two insertions are Sheehan's. The latter two are mine and provide Sheehan's references to Heidegger's texts, modified to be stylistically consistent with my own).

(SZ: 16), which lies in the fact that Dasein understands the being of entities—both its own being and that of entities unlike it. The being of entities unlike Dasein comes to occlude Dasein's own way of being from it: 'The kind of being which belongs to Dasein is rather such that, in understanding its own being, it has a tendency to do so in terms of that entity towards which it comports itself proximally and in a way which is essentially constant—in terms of the "world"' (SZ: 15). 'World' refers to 'the totality of those entities which can be present-at-hand within the world' (SZ: 64). So, the claim is that Dasein has a tendency to understand its own being as presencing-at-hand. It does so 'because the phenomenon of the world itself gets passed over in this absorption in the world' (SZ: 130)—because, that is, in third-plank unconcealing world is backgrounded (untruth), that backgrounding is covered up (the mystery), and the whole thing is concealed in falling absorption in entities (erring). The basic structure of Dasein's disclosing, or third-plank unconcealing, 'proximally misses itself and covers itself up [*verdeckt sich*]' (SZ: 130, original italicised).

In this way, Dasein is ontologically far from itself. It is, at the same time, ontically closest to itself: 'we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves' (SZ: 15). And 'pre-ontologically it is surely not a stranger' (SZ: 16), since Dasein always has some sense of its being as disclosing in its pre-ontological understanding of being.

So, the story told in 'On the Essence of Truth' and anticipated in *Being and Time* contains a number of different but related phenomena of concealment and concealing. On this account, third-plank unconcealing works by (i) backgrounding the world (untruth), (ii) concealing that backgrounding (the mystery), and (iii) concealing that concealing by absorbing Dasein in entities (erring, falling). So absorbed, Dasein is also (iv) concealed from itself, in the sense that it misunderstands its own being. As we saw, the backgrounding of the world is a form of both second- and third-plank *krupstein*. Concealing that backgrounding is a third-plank form of *kruptesthai*, as is the concealing of that concealing in falling. Dasein's self-misunderstanding is also a form of third-plank *kruptesthai*, since in it third-plank unconcealing hides the essential structure of its own operating *qua* disclosing.

There is, however, the possibility of overcoming both Dasein's self-misunderstanding and its absorption in entities. In 'On the Essence of Truth', Heidegger speaks of 'the resolute openness toward the mystery' (OET: 151/GA9: 198), which is 'the possibility that, by experiencing errancy itself and by not mistaking the mystery of Da-sein, they [i.e., human beings] *not* let themselves be led astray' (OET: 151/GA9: 197, insertion mine). This, despite the fact that 'errancy belongs to the inner constitution of the Da-sein into which historical human beings are admitted' (OET: 150/GA9: 196). The vision seems to be one in which Dasein ek-sists (discloses) and insists (discovers entities) but is not absorbed in entities. Because it is not absorbed, it does not misunderstand itself and it has access to the concealed backgrounding of the world. Dasein can achieve this through philosophical questioning: '[t]he glimpse into the mystery out of errancy is questioning—in the sense of that unique question of what entities as such are as a whole. This questioning thinks the question of the *being* of entities' (OET: 151/GA9: 198) and so is a specifically philosophical questioning (OET: 152/GA9: 199).²² Philosophical thinking 'does not disrupt [*sprengt*] the concealing [*Verbergung*]' (OET: 152/GA9: 199) of the mystery, but it does disrupt erring or falling absorption. Such philosophising is thus a form of *alētheuein*₂, which renders the concealment that erring or falling produces a form of *lēthē*₂. This philosophical move is similar to that at the second plank that made manifest the comporting that is usually hidden from Dasein as it engages with entities. The difference is that, because there are layers of self-concealing at work at the third plank, philosophical thinking does not reach full clarity but apparently can only access the mystery, which is the concealed backgrounding of the world.

Does it thereby encounter the self-concealing of being? That depends on whether the account given in 'On the Essence of

²² It is this questioning that the philosophical tradition that Heidegger calls 'metaphysics' fails to undertake, which leaves it engaging with entities rather than confronting the mystery: '[D]oes it belong to the essential destiny of metaphysics that its own ground withdraws from it because in the rise of unconcealedness its essential core, namely, concealedness [*Verborgenheit*], remains absent in favor of that which is unconcealed, which can thereby first appear as entities?' (Heidegger, 'Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?"', 280–1/GA9: 370).

Truth' and anticipated in *Being and Time* is an account of the self-concealing of being. There are at least two reasons to think that it is not. First, while erring is a form of *kruptesthai*, it is dependent on two prior phenomena of *kruptein*. As such, this self-concealing is not a primordial phenomenon. Yet Heidegger holds that the self-concealing of being is 'one primordially proper to it' (BQP: 178/GA45: 210). Second, and relatedly, when in other works Heidegger talks about the self-concealing of being, he seems to have in mind not a tripled concealing but a more simple—in the etymological sense of *single, unfolded*—phenomenon.

14. Being Backgrounded

When Heidegger talks about the self-concealing of being after 'On the Essence of Truth', he seems to have something less convoluted in mind. Consider: '[T]he abandonment of entities by being means that beyng *conceals itself* [*verbirgt sich*] in the manifestness of entities. And beyng itself is essentially determined as this self-withdrawing concealment [*Sichentziehende[s] Verbergen*]' (C: 88/GA65: 111). On the one hand, this 'abandonment of entities by beyng' seems to be a universalised and historicised version of falling or erring—one on which Dasein's consequent self-misunderstanding is broadened out into a flattening of the ways of being of entities in general: '[e]ntities then appear *in that way*, namely as objects and as things objectively present, as if beyng were not occurring essentially [*weste*]' (C: 91/GA65: 115). (This will later, in 'The Question Concerning Technology', become 'enframing', in which entities in the modern technological world—including Dasein—show up as mere resources and the happening of being is not manifest.) Although speaking of the 'abandonment' of entities by being suggests that being is an aggrieved agent, the phenomenon is one of Dasein's forgetting, as it is in the forgetting of the mystery: 'The abandonment by beyng happens to entities and indeed to entities as a whole and thereby also to that entity which, as human, stands in the midst of entities and, in doing so, forgets their beyng' (C: 92/GA65: 116).

On the other hand, passages like this last one suggest that being is forgotten by virtue of entities as such and as a whole appearing. This is different from the forgetting that I explored in the previous section. It is not a consequence of the backgrounding of the world but a third-plank version of it. Consider this passage:

Since entities, and what is known as entities, stand in the clearing, being [Seyn] reveals itself [enthüllt sich] in a particular way. Its self-concealment [Sichverbergen] is therefore one primordially proper to it. It shows itself [zeigt sich] and withdraws [entzieht sich] at the same time. This *vacillating self-refusal* [zögernde Sichversagen] is what is properly lighted up in the clearing, and yet for the most part goes unheeded [nicht achten]—corresponding to our comportment in the midst of entities. E.g., if we stand in a clearing in the woods, we see only what can be found within it: the free place, the trees about—and precisely not the luminosity of the clearing itself. As little as the openness is simply the unconcealedness of entities, but is the clearing *for* the self-concealing [Sich verbergen], so little is this self-concealment [Sichverbergen] a mere being-absent. It is rather a vacillating, hesitant refusal [zögernde Versagung].

(BQP: 178 / GA45: 210–11, Heidegger's italics)

This is a much simpler story than that told in 'On the Essence of Truth'. It involves only two moments: entities as such and as a whole show up, and being conceals itself.²³ This passage introduces Dasein into the account:

Although the human being and only it constantly sees into the open, i.e., encounters entities in the free of being, in order to be struck by them, yet the human being is not thereby already entitled to bring being itself explicitly into its ownmost, i.e., to bring it into the open (the free), i.e., to poetize being, to think it, and to say it. Because only

²³ Heidegger does say at one point, for example 'something concealed [Verborgenes] [...] conceals itself [verbirgt sich] precisely when we immerse ourselves in the clearing, submit to open entities, and are lost to them' (BQP: 178/GA45: 210). This might imply that there is a doubled concealing, but I think it more likely that it is the self-concealing that renders the 'something' concealed in the first place.

unconcealed entities can appear and do appear in the open of being, the human being adheres, at first unwittingly and then constantly, to these entities. It forgets being and in such forgetting learns nothing more than the overlooking of being and alienation from the open.

(P: 151 / GA54: 224–25)

Here again, rather than the multi-step process outlined in ‘On the Essence of Truth,’ we have only the appearing of entities and Dasein’s forgetting of being.

Not only are there fewer components in this account of the self-concealing of being, the concealing in question also occurs ‘earlier’ in the story than it did in the story of erring, falling absorption. On the story of untruth and erring, being or third-plank unconcealing happens, world appears as backgrounded (untruth), that concealing is concealed (the mystery), Dasein is absorbed in entities (erring, falling) and as a consequence (its) being is concealed. This last has the most claim to be called the self-concealing of being. On the story told in the passages we have just considered, third-plank unconcealing happens in a way that involves self-showing and self-withdrawing from the get-go. The concealing occurs at the very start of the story, and it seems to be a condition of possibility for entities showing up, on the basis of which Dasein can then be absorbed in them. What could this original phenomenon of third-plank *kruptesthai* be? And why would being immediately conceal itself?

Heidegger frequently suggests that being is self-concealing in this manner because it is too close to be manifest. For example:

Presencing is luminous self-concealing [*gelichtete[s] Sichverbergen*]. Shying away [*die Scheu*] corresponds to it. It is a reserved remaining-concealed [*verhaltene[s] Verborgen-bleiben*] before the closeness of what is present. It is the sheltering [*Bergen*] of what is present within the intangible nearness of what remains in coming—that coming which is an increasing self-veiling [*Sichverhüllen*]. Thus shying-away, and everything related to it, must be thought in the brilliant light of remaining-concealed [*Verborgenbleibens*]. (EGT: 108 / GA7: 271)

The suggestion is that being is so close to us that we cannot see it, and instead we are absorbed in what is next closest: entities. ‘That which is nearest, even though it has the consistency of shadows, holds humans captive day after day’.²⁴ So much so that ‘[t]he path to what lies under our noses is [...] the furthest and hence the most difficult path for us’ (PR: 5/GA10: 5). Note that this is the opposite of what we saw in the previous section, when the ontic was so close to Dasein that the ontological was far away. Here, the ontological is maximally near and that makes it too near to see. This may be only a rhetorical difference, however, since in both cases the result is that entities show up to Dasein and (its) being does not.

Appealing to nearness as the reason that being is hidden invokes what Heidegger calls ‘the law of proximity’, which holds that ‘[w]e see first, strictly speaking, never the closest but always what is next closest’ (P: 135/GA54: 201).²⁵ (Strictly, Heidegger says that this *follows* from the law of proximity, but it is not clear in the passage what other principle he might be referring to.) The law of proximity applies most clearly to ready-to-hand entities. Heidegger describes the glasses that cannot be seen by a person attending to a painting, and the street to which one pays no mind as one approaches an acquaintance (SZ: 107). One might think that the point is that both the glasses and the street are physically close to us—right on or underneath our body—and that this is why they obey the law of proximity. But the proximity at issue is not that of an object in space but instead that of a ready-to-hand entity. Both the glasses and the street are tools and tools are proximate when they are being used. When a tool is being used, the competent user is not directed towards the tool *with which* they are working. They are directed towards what they are using the tool *in order to* accomplish (SZ: 69). The glasses are *in order to* view the painting and the street is *in order to* get from B to A. So, in wearing glasses and walking down the

²⁴ Heidegger, ‘Plato’s Doctrine of Truth’, 164/GA9: 214.

²⁵ Frings explicitly identifies the law of proximity as the reason for being’s self-concealing: ‘Thinking-proper dwells in the pure nearness (law of proximity) of a-letheia: the self-concealing *in un-concealing*’ (Frings, ‘Heraclitus: Heidegger’s 1943 Lecture Held at Freiburg University’, 252). He does not, however, explain what it is for being to obey the law of proximity.

street, we attend to the painting and to the approaching acquaintance. That which is less proximate—the tool's *in order to*—shows up to us, while the tool itself, as that *with which* we work, does not (at least, not as saliently). The proximity in question is that of an instrument.

Similarly, we might think: being has a job to do and it does that job best by concealing itself. Thus Dreyfus: 'Like the illumination in a room, style [i.e., an understanding of being] normally functions best to let us see things when we don't see *it*. As Heidegger puts it, the mode of revealing has to *withdraw* in order to do its job of revealing things.'²⁶ But being does not really have a job. It is not an instrument or an entity ready-to-hand. It may be analogous to such entities but the analogy needs to be worked out. If tools are proximate because they are *in order to*, what is the specific nearness of being?

Being is near to Dasein for precisely the reason that both Dasein's disclosing and the being of entities belong together on the third plank: the happening of being and Dasein's disclosing are correlated happenings, intimately intertwined and each in need of the other. With this intimacy between being and disclosing, Dasein has an ontological proximity to being (even if it is also ontologically far, in the sense that it misunderstands (its own) being). But why should this mean that being is not manifest to Dasein? It would seem, rather, to guarantee that being *is* manifest to Dasein, since Dasein is the entity who understands being and so is precisely the entity to whom being does appear.

Some readers suggest that it is the very pervasiveness of the manifestness of being to Dasein that makes it invisible. Being is 'manifest in everything we see and do, and so too pervasive to notice'.²⁷ It is atmospheric, like the air that we breathe.²⁸ It is familiar, reliable, taken for granted. Heidegger himself speaks along these lines, drawing an analogy with light:

²⁶ Dreyfus, 'Heidegger's Ontology of Art', 409. Insertion mine. Wrathall identifies this as a fourth-plank concealment: 'the style of being that allows things to show up as having an essence is most invisible when it is most effective' (Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 33).

²⁷ Dreyfus, 'Heidegger's Ontology of Art', 409.

²⁸ '[M]eaning is the invisible air I breathe' (Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 116).

Being itself is unquestioned and taken for granted, for it is only in the light of being that entities can be asked about, and the question concerning what entities are can be answered. However, the light itself remains unnoticed, just as one takes the day for granted and in its 'light' concerns oneself with the matters of the day. (H: 74 / GA55: 98)²⁹

As with light, being's nearness would consist in its ubiquity and familiarity. 'On account of its obviousness, being [*Seyn*] is something forgotten' (BQP: 159/GA45: 185). But, although Heidegger does say things such as this, I remain unconvinced that this is the way in which being—or for that matter, light—obeys the law of proximity. One reason is that taking something for granted because it is familiar is contingent and rather easily overcome. This makes it unattractive as a candidate for the essential self-concealing of being. Another reason is Plato. It was Plato who originally pointed out that light makes visible but is not itself visible.³⁰ The reason that it is not visible, however, is not that it is ubiquitous and familiar but instead that it is a condition of possibility. As Plato explains, seeing colours is possible only if there is light and so a sun.³¹ While Plato thinks that the sun is an object of perception, it is not itself within the realm of coming to be that it makes possible.³² Yet it is strictly not the sun that makes sight possible but rather its light. 'All vision needs light, although the light is not itself seen' (BPP: 284/GA24: 403). This lack of visibility thus belongs to it essentially, as a condition of possibility.

Some readers take the point to be some version of: the condition of possibility of *x* cannot itself be *x*.³³ Thus because light makes vision and visibility possible, it cannot itself be visible. So too, what

²⁹ Thus also Frings: 'In visual perception, our eagerness to see things makes us jump over and overlook what is nearest in that perception, light, being taken for granted most of the time. When applied to thinking, being, likewise, is jumped over ("law of proximity")' (Frings, 'Heracitus: Heidegger's 1943 Lecture Held at Freiburg University', 259).

³⁰ Plato, *Republic*, 507e.

³¹ Plato, *Republic*. The reference to light is at 507d-e and the reference to the sun is at 508a. ³² '[T]he sun not only provides visible things with the power to be seen but also with coming to be, growth and nourishment, although it is not itself coming to be' (Plato, *Republic*, 509b). Plato says that the sun is an object of perception at 508b.

³³ This principle is closely connected to, but slightly different from, the impossibility of self-referentiality that we find, for example, in the eye that cannot see itself, the I that cannot know itself, and the knife that cannot cut itself.

makes things intelligible cannot be made intelligible, and what accounts for appearing cannot itself appear. Thus Polt says that '[t]he giving of the sense of givenness cannot itself be given, as it is not subject to that sense. The origin of significance cannot itself be significant.'³⁴ John D. Caputo holds that being, as the measure of entities, cannot itself be measured.³⁵ And Sheehan claims that 'the ultimate presupposition [...] must always be presupposed in any attempt to know it. It always lies "behind" us, so to speak, and it will always remain behind us (i.e. unknowable) even when we turn around to take a look at it. Consequently, we cannot go "beyond" or "behind" it without contradicting ourselves.'³⁶ The metaphors of 'beyond' or 'behind' lead some to express the point by taking being to be a sort of frame or context that is unavailable from 'within' that which it frames or contextualises. Polt speaks of *parameters*: 'the happening in which the being of beings is *given* cannot itself be given, because this event of be-ing sets the parameters for what givenness itself means. The giving of givenness cannot be given.'³⁷ Or, being is a background that we cannot treat as we treat what is in the foreground:

As the background to all presentation and representation, be-ing eludes all attempts to picture it. We can never completely control or understand be-ing, for all possibilities of control and understanding grow out of be-ing as an event that exceeds them. Just as a snake swallowing its tail can never make itself disappear, our understanding can

³⁴ Polt, 'Meaning, Excess, and Event', 44.

³⁵ Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 81.

³⁶ Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 227. Sheehan makes this claim about the clearing. He also says that the clearing is concealed because 'it is the necessarily presupposed reason why there is an open at all' (*Making Sense of Heidegger*, 78).

³⁷ Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 146. Polt makes similar appeals when discussing our inability to access entities as such and as a whole, which he thinks cannot be accessed from the 'inside' (although he conflates this with the inaccessibility of familiarity): 'We are primally familiar with the whole; we inhabit it. It is our own in the sense that we are comfortable in it, as a fish is comfortable in the sea. But this is why we cannot recognize it as our own, any more than a fish can recognize that it belongs in the sea and not on land. Precisely because we trust the whole, we cannot experience it as a whole. As long as we are immersed in it, it is impossible for us to encounter it as such. [...] The experience of a whole as such requires a space that, paradoxically, is not contained within the whole' (Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 25).

never get its sources totally into its view in such a way as to conquer them and make them superfluous.³⁸

Less picturesquely: '[t]he being of beings makes it possible for us to encounter beings; for that very reason, it cannot be grasped as if it were itself an entity, and it tends to remain in the background'.³⁹

But when Heidegger talks about the essential invisibility of light, he does not use these sorts of formulations. He explains why light is not visible for Plato:

Sight in general, and thus also the sight that penetrates, is first made possible by light. Light (brightness) too is transparent, but in a stricter sense [than the sense in which glass and water are transparent]: as the genuinely originally transparent. We see two things: light first lets the object through *to be viewed* as something visible, and also lets-through the view *to the visible object*. Light is what *lets-through*.

(ET: 41 / GA34: 55-56, insertion mine)

Light allows both visibility and vision by letting them through itself to meet one another. By being transparent, or invisible, light makes possible visibility and vision. So, it is not that light is not visible because it is a condition of possibility of vision and visibility. It is *because* light is not visible that it can be made use of by vision—as a medium. A medium is a condition of possibility that cannot be conditioned in the way that it makes possible, precisely because as a medium it must let through.

Being also lets through: it is the presencing that lets entities through into presence. Like light, it can do this only if it does not impede. Using the image of the clearing to speak of third-plank unconcealment, Heidegger explains: 'We speak of a "forest clearing"; that means a place which is *free* from trees, which *gives* free access for

³⁸ Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 144. Jean Beaufret also positions being, as *phusis*, as a background that cannot be foregrounded, by appeal to an analogy with nature: 'In the non-appearance wherein the radiant opening only radiates while disappearing, there is still opening, discretely ungraspable, as nature itself is in the greenness of spring, which announces nature's awakening without nature's ever stepping into the foreground itself' (Beaufret, 'Heraclitus and Parmenides', 75).

³⁹ Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 143.

going through and looking through. *Lighting up* therefore means making-free, giving-free. Light lights up, makes-free, provides a way through' (ET: 44/GA34: 59). Being does not literally light up but it does provide a way through for the appearing of entities. ('The appearing of entities' must refer to second-plank unconcealing, rather than to the appearing of the world *qua* entities as such and as a whole.)⁴⁰ In order for being to provide a way through for entities, it cannot activate Dasein's absorption. So, it cannot allow itself the character that it is allowing entities to have. This is what makes it like a medium and so like light. This also makes being somewhat like a tool or an instrument, which is *in order to*. Being plays a similar sort of enabling role—although it obeys not the law of proximity but the law of presence. The law of presence holds that presencing cannot itself come to presence.⁴¹ This seems to be the principle that guarantees that being is self-concealing.

The problem with the law of presence is that it does not, as currently formulated, apply to being. Being does in some sense 'come to presence.' This is why, as we saw at the start of this section, being is said to be that which 'shows itself [*zeigt sich*] and withdraws [*entzieht sich*] at the same time' (BQP: 178/GA45: 210–11). Whether or not we are explicitly aware of it, being must shine out for us if entities are to presence in their being: 'Without regard to whether or not it is expressly brought into view by us, it [being] already shines; for it already shines even where we experience that which is only for us the more overt: particular entities. These show themselves only in the light of being' (PR: 64/GA10: 94). Being—disclosing, worlding, presencing—in some sense 'comes to presence' when entities do. Indeed, '*phusis*, as the pure emerging, is more manifest than every manifest object'—but in such a way that it therefore 'remains and unfolds as the inconspicuous' (H: 109/GA55: 143).

⁴⁰ Dropping world out of the picture is what simplifies the post-'On the Essence of Truth' story of the self-concealing of being.

⁴¹ This law is formulated by Miguel de Beistegui: 'The law of presence is such that what it presents is only its counter-essence; presence happens only in the covering up of its essence' (de Beistegui, *Heidegger and the Political: Dystopias*, 132). Beistegui, however, thinks this in terms not of the presencing of entities as such and as a whole but of the presencing of 'this or that being' (i.e., entity) (de Beistegui, *Heidegger and the Political*, 132).

So, it is not the case that presencing cannot come to presence. It is, however, the case that presencing cannot come to presence *in the way that entities do*.⁴² When Heidegger identifies what is distinctive about how being ‘presences’, however, he does one of two things. First, he offers a temporal version of the law of proximity, on which the unconcealing of being differs from the uncovering of entities because it occurs *first*: ‘*Phusis* is not the invisible—on the contrary, it is what is seen inceptually [*anfänglich Gesichtet*] which, however, is for the most part never properly beheld [*Erblickte*]’ (H: 109/GA55: 143).⁴³ What is grasped beforehand in this way is grasped differently from what is grasped subsequently. Space and time, for example, show up differently to us than do ‘concrete objects’ *in* space and time (H: 109/GA55: 143). But, second, when Heidegger comes to articulate the way in which that which is seen beforehand is seen differently, the difference is said to consist in the fact that it is self-concealing:

[... Being [*Seyn*],] by which entities are distinguished from non-entities [*Nichtseiende*], and owing to which they are and are such and such, does not stand in the clearing but in *hiddenness* [*Verhüllung*]. Consequently, the attempt to grasp this being [*Seyn*] as if it were an entity yields emptiness. Being [*Seyn*] is not merely hidden [*verborgen*]; it withdraws [*entzieht sich*] and conceals itself [*verbirgt sich*]. From this we derive an essential insight: the clearing, in which entities are, is not simply bounded and delimited by something hidden [*Verborgenes*] but by something *self-concealing* [*Sichverbergendes*].

(BQP: 178 / GA45: 210, Heidegger’s italics)

⁴² Polt discusses this, and the question of whether Heidegger’s middle-period work is phenomenological, in *The Emergence of Being*, 100ff. Capobianco limits the non-ontic manifest-ness of being to only a select few: ‘That Being itself is “manifest” in its own proper way is an important feature of Heidegger’s thinking that is often overlooked by commentators. Being as *physis* is “inapparent”—but *only* in the sense that it does not appear *as a being*. Yet Being is most certainly “manifest” to those who can truly “see”, such as the earliest Greek thinkers’ (Heidegger’s *Way of Being*, 71–2).

⁴³ The full passage reads: ‘*Phusis* does not occur within what emerges and what has emerged in the manner of something that appears: rather, it is the inconspicuous [*das Unscheinbare*] in all appearing things [*in allem Erscheinenden*]. However, it is in no way “the invisible” [*das Unsichtbare*], as the previously mentioned philological translations erroneously suggest. *Phusis* is not the invisible—on the contrary, it is what is seen inceptually [*das anfänglich Gesichtet*] which, however, is for the most part never properly beheld [*das Erblickte*]’ (H: 109/GA55: 143).

This passage says that being's appearing is unlike that of entities and that it is so *because* it is intrinsically self-concealing. The same point again: 'the self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*] of the essence of being at the same time is precisely the manner that being bestows itself, proffers itself, to us in entities' (PR: 54/GA10: 81). Or again:

Being is in no way as immediately familiar and overt to us as are particular entities. It is not as though being keeps itself completely concealed [*verborgen*]. If this happened, then even entities could never lie over against and be familiar to us. Indeed being must of itself and already beforehand shine, so that particular entities can appear. [...] From this we come to see that, compared to entities which are immediately accessible, being manifests the character of holding itself back [*sich zu halten*], of concealing itself [*sich verbergen*] in a certain manner.

(PR: 63 / GA10: 93)

But this merely brings us full circle, back to our starting point. We started with the question of why and how being conceals itself and this resolved into the question of how being's appearing differs from that of entities. Now we find that the answer to that question is that being appears in a distinctively self-concealing manner. But what is this self-concealing? In order to answer this, I suggest that we take a different approach.

15. The Concealing of the Whence of Thrownness

The self-concealing of being is a feature of the happening of being, or third-plank unconcealing. Third-plank unconcealing can also be addressed as the worlding of the world or as Dasein's disclosing, with which the happening of being is correlated. If being happens in a way that involves self-concealing, then that self-concealing might be correlated with a self-concealing in Dasein's disclosing. On the assumption that it is, in the following sections I pursue third-plank *kruptesthai* as a self-concealing of disclosing. Disclosing's reflexive finitude, and so its self-concealing, belongs to its openness

to itself as thrown into being. In that thrownness lie two phenomena of third-plank *kruptesthai*: the concealing of the whence of thrownness and the concealing of the whither of thrownness. I turn to the latter in §22. In this section, I explore the concealing of the whence of thrownness.

Disclosing always finds itself *thrown*. It is thrown not into embodiment or a natural environment but into the necessity of its own happening. Thrownness is the ‘that it is and has to be’ of Dasein as disclosing (SZ: 134)—which is to say, it is disclosing’s being stuck with itself and a case of Dasein’s being stuck with disclosing. To express the latter, Heidegger says that Dasein is thrown into existence (SZ: 276), or the *da* (SZ: 135, 148, 297, 413); it is ‘delivered over’ (*überantwortet*) to its being (SZ: 42, 135), itself (SZ: 144, 192, 284, 383), itself in its being (SZ: 189), existence (SZ: 276), and the *da* (SZ: 148).⁴⁴

The phenomenon of concealment in Dasein’s *that it is and has to be* is the fact that ‘[t]he pure “that it is” shows itself, but the “whence” and the “whither” remain in darkness [*im Dunkel*]’ (SZ: 134). The whence [*Woher*] of thrownness, or that ‘from which’ the throw of thrownness occurs, is the ground of or reason for Dasein’s *that it is and has to be*. This is the ground or reason that would make sense of the fact that Dasein is—where that means, that disclosing, worlding, third-plank unconcealing takes place at all. The claim is that the reason for this is concealed: Dasein’s *that it is* is ‘concealed [*verborgen*] as regards the “why” of it’ (SZ: 276, translation modified). It is an enigma ‘why entities are to be *uncovered*, why *truth* and *Dasein* must be’ (SZ: 228). The ground of third-plank unconcealing is concealed.

This ground can be concealed only because Dasein seeks to disclose it. Something can be concealed only from an openness, and something can be a ground only for an openness that seeks grounds. The dimension of disclosing that is open to its own ground is ‘finding’ (*Befindlichkeit*, lit. sofindingness). Finding is Dasein’s being

⁴⁴ For more on thrownness, including what Dasein is and is not thrown into and the whence and whither of thrownness, see my ‘Thrownness (*Geworfenheit*)’ and my ‘Situation and Limitation: Making Sense of Heidegger on Thrownness’.

receptive to projects and entities that matter to it.⁴⁵ What matters does so insofar as it has an impact on Dasein's task of living out its *that it is and has to be* (whether that of being Dasein or that of living out some particular identity, such as being a painter or being a parent). So, as open to what matters, finding is always open to Dasein's being thrown. Different modes of finding, however, are open to Dasein's *that it is and has to be* in different ways—primarily, either by turning away from it or by turning towards it (SZ: 135). The mode of finding in which Dasein turns directly towards thrownness is the mood of angst. In *Being and Time*, angst reveals that from which inauthentic Dasein flees when it falls—namely, 'the uncanniness which lies in Dasein—in Dasein as thrown being-in-the-world, which has been delivered over to itself in its being' (SZ: 189). What is uncanny or unhomely about Dasein's being thrown is precisely that it is thrown *from* a concealed ground.⁴⁶ In 'What is Metaphysics?', angst asks: why are there entities, as such and as a whole, rather than not? (WM: 96/GA9: 122; cf. IM: 1/GA40: 1). This question asks: why is there world, rather than not? This is not an ontic question but an ontological question: why does worlding obtain, such that there is world, rather than not? Why is there disclosing? Why being? But angst offers no answer. In place of an answer to the 'why', there is only 'the altogether unsettling experience of this hovering where there is nothing to hold on to' (WM: 89/GA9: 112). It seems that in angst, Dasein is open to the ground of disclosing—the whence of thrownness—as concealed from it. But what guarantees that there is not another mode of finding in which the ground is found and so unconcealed?

Consider Heidegger's question, 'Has a case of Dasein as itself ever decided freely whether it wants to come into "Dasein" or not, and will it ever be able to make such a decision?' (SZ: 228, original italicised, translation modified). He answers: "'In itself", it is quite incomprehensible why entities are to be *uncovered*, why *truth* and *Dasein* must be' (SZ: 228). Now, it is not obvious why or how

⁴⁵ For a full account of finding as a being open to vocational and solicitous calls, see my 'Finding Oneself, Called'.

⁴⁶ I have argued for this at length in my *Heidegger on Being Uncanny*.

this incomprehensibility is an answer to the question of choice. Expressed first-personally, the question posed was: did I choose, or could I have chosen, to be Dasein? This question is an attempt on the part of a case of Dasein to make sense of the fact *that it is and has to be* by appeal to a choice that it does not make. This attempt to provide itself a ground fails, and it does so because it is self-presupposing: in order to choose itself, an entity would have to be a chooser already and so already be a case of Dasein. Dasein cannot be grounded in its own choice. This is to say that Dasein cannot make sense of why it is by appeal to its own choice. So, the answer to the question is: no, a case of Dasein could not have chosen to come into 'Dasein'. Heidegger's answer to the question—that the fact that Dasein *is* is incomprehensible—is a version of this answer only if the point generalises: Dasein cannot make sense of its ground by appeal to choice, and it cannot make sense of its ground by *any* appeal. The ground is necessarily concealed.

Sheehan thinks that what warrants this generalisation is that any attempt on Dasein's part to grasp its own ground is like choice in being self-presupposing. He concludes from this that the ground of disclosing is always concealed:

[W]e cannot question back behind this thrown-openness (which is ourselves) to find its 'cause', without presupposing this very thrown-openness as what first makes such questioning possible. This primal, always operative openedness is usually overlooked precisely because, as the ultimate presupposition of everything human, it is necessarily unknowable ('hidden', 'absent') in its why and wherefore.⁴⁷

(Notice how similar this is to the idea that being, as an ultimate pre-supposition, is concealed.) As Heidegger puts it, Dasein 'never comes back behind its thrownness' (SZ: 284, 383). But why does this guarantee that the ground of Dasein's *that it is* is concealed? Sheehan explains:

⁴⁷ Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 76.

We will never get an answer to the question ‘What possibilizes that which possibilizes everything?’ Even to ask that question is a fool’s errand insofar as it traps us in a *petitio principii*, a begging of the question—in this case, not realizing that we are already wrapped up from the outset in what we are attempting to find. [...]hus, to seek the ultimate basis for intelligibility already presupposes the ultimate basis of intelligibility and thus is caught in circular reasoning. Everything is knowable except the reason why everything is knowable.⁴⁸

But it is not obvious why this self-presupposing, stated generally, is a problem. If the ultimate basis of being intelligible (Dasein as disclosing, worlding, third-plank unconcealing) is presupposed by the quest to find it, then why does it follow that the quest is doomed? That aiming to understand the ground of *x* presupposes the ground of *x* is either a harmless circularity or a bland triviality. It is blandly trivial if the point is that the quest to find the ground of *x* presupposes that *x* obtains and possesses a ground. This is an ordinary condition of seeking a ground rather than a question-begging move. It is harmlessly circular if what is presupposed is not the fact of *x* and its ground but instead some grasp of it on the part of the seeker. This is merely the fact that ‘[e]very seeking gets guided beforehand by what is sought’ (SZ: 5)—which, as Heidegger argues, is simply a feature of hermeneutic understanding and not a vicious circularity (SZ: 8).

The problem with presupposing itself as a chooser is not that Dasein posits or assumes the ground that it seeks but that Dasein is attempting to precede itself. No one can precede their own birth! This is why Dasein cannot choose itself. And yet, at the same time, it must choose itself—not only in becoming authentic by choosing to make up for not choosing (SZ: 268), but also in standing at its own ground. The call of conscience calls a case of Dasein to explicitly and authentically take over the self-grounding structure of Dasein itself, as ‘being-the-[null-]basis-of-a-nullity’ (SZ: 283, original italicised):

⁴⁸ Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 228.

And how *is* Dasein this thrown basis [of itself]? Only in that it projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown. The Self, which as such has to lay the basis for itself, can *never* get that basis into its power; and yet, as existing, it must take over being-a-basis. To be its own thrown basis is that ability-to-be which is the issue for care.

(SZ: 284, insertion mine)

An authentic case of Dasein accomplishes a version of this in projecting authentically upon an ability-to-be, in light of death (whatever that turns out to mean). But any case of Dasein, *qua* case of Dasein, *is* Dasein by virtue of accomplishing this same impossible self-grounding, in which it gives itself a ground by taking over its own ground. Heidegger later calls this sort of self-grounding an 'originary leap', in which something 'attains itself as ground by leaping' (IM: 7/GA40: 5). (This leaping, of course, is the same as being thrown.)

In one sense, this self-grounding leap is an answer to the 'why' question seeking the ground of Dasein's disclosing. In another sense, it is a sham answer, because it makes no sense. Dasein cannot precede itself in order to ground itself, so how can it be its own basis? Even though it is its own basis, Dasein cannot get its basis into its own power—which means, within the range of its disclosing. Dasein cannot make sense of how it could be its own ground. For this reason, that ground shows up as concealed. The concealing of the whence of thrownness is Dasein's mysterious self-grounding. This is what is revealed in the question about choice: Dasein must choose itself and yet cannot, and the mystery of how it can do both at once is the fact that it is 'incomprehensible why [...] *truth* and *Dasein* must be' (SZ: 228).

The concealing of the whence of thrownness is a third-plank phenomenon of *krupetesthai*. A case could be made that it is a form of *kruptein*, since what is concealed is something *other than* third-plank unconcealing itself—in this case, its ground. Yet because this ground shows up to Dasein only by virtue of the fact that Dasein seeks it, there is no reason to take it as something other than disclosing. It could be merely an artifact of disclosing: something that Dasein is looking for and failing to find. We might even say that

having a concealed ground is a story that disclosing tells about itself in an attempt to make sense of itself. In revealing its ground as concealed, or incomprehensible, disclosing conceals something of itself from itself. This makes that concealing a form of *kruptesthai*.

For the same reason, it is not a third-plank form of *lēthē*. *Lēthē* is a concealment that lies at the basis of unconcealing, and we might think that this is similar to a concealing that lies at the ground of disclosing. Further, both are revealed in angst. But they are revealed differently in angst. The concealed whence of thrownness is revealed in the failed search for an answer to the question of ‘why’ entities as such and as a whole are—i.e., world in its worlding is—rather than nothing, whereas *lēthē* is that nothing. The difference lies in the fact that the two are different types of basis. The whence of thrownness is a ground in the sense of the answer to a ‘why’ question. *Lēthē* is a ground in the sense that it is presupposed by a privative phenomenon. The difference is seen in the fact that the concealing of the ground of disclosing does not precede disclosing, as does *lēthē*, but is a product of it. Further, disclosing makes manifest its concealed ground rather than overcoming and vanquishing it, as disclosing does *lēthē*.

Let me now complete the discussion of the concealed whence of thrownness by tracking some further concealings and concealments that it makes possible (§16) and by identifying the correlated phenomenon of concealing in being (§17).

16. Inauthentic Disclosing

I argued in the previous section that the concealing of the whence of thrownness is a phenomenon of third-plank *kruptesthai*. It produces a concealment—the concealed whence of thrownness—from which inauthentic Dasein flees in its falling. In this section, I digress slightly from my main argument in order to explore inauthentic disclosing as a phenomenon of concealing and to add it to the taxonomy. I have already discussed inauthentic discovering as a form of second-plank *kruptein*, which discovers entities in a way that is partial, obscuring, or distorted (§8). At the third plank, at issue is

not discovering entities inauthentically but instead inauthentic disclosing, in which Dasein's disclosing is open to itself in a way that covers over. In *Being and Time*, inauthentic disclosing is a flight *towards* entities and *from* Dasein's ownmost possibility: death. To flee from death is for Dasein to misunderstand, distort, or conceal its own finite being. In this section, I argue that this concealing is a turning away from the concealed whence of thrownness and so is based on the form of *kruptesthai* that I identified in the previous section (§15). Insofar as it takes advantage of Dasein's being absorbed in entities, it is also made possible by falling *qua* being absorbed or erring (§13). Inauthentic disclosing is a contingent, derivative, third-plank form of *kruptesthai*.

Heidegger understands inauthentic Dasein's flight from itself as a flight from its uncanniness:

When in falling we flee *into* the 'at-home' of publicness, we flee *in the face of* the 'not-at-home'; that is, we flee in the face of the uncanniness which lies in Dasein—in Dasein as thrown being-in-the-world, which has been delivered over to itself in its being. This uncanniness pursues Dasein constantly, and is a threat to its everyday lostness in the 'they', though not explicitly. (SZ: 189)

We see what this uncanny threat is when Dasein faces up to it in hearing the call of conscience. Conscience's cry of 'guilty!' makes manifest a nullity in thrownness, which is the fact that Dasein 'has been brought into its "there", but *not* of its own accord' and that '[a]lthough it has *not* laid that basis *itself*, it reposes in the weight of it' as its *that it is and has to be*' (SZ: 284).⁴⁹ That Dasein must be its own basis and yet cannot is what makes the 'whence' of thrownness show up as concealed. Inauthentic cases of Dasein turn away from this concealed ground and in doing so turn away not only from

⁴⁹ Heidegger also identifies a nullity in Dasein's being associated with projecting rather than being thrown: 'it always stands in one possibility or another: it constantly is *not* other possibilities, and it has waived these in its existentiell projection' (SZ: 285). I fail to see how this is a significant nullity in the structure of projecting, which might motivate inauthentic flight, as opposed to a feature of the logic of choice that we might find existentially unsettling. In any case, Heidegger clearly takes the nullity in thrownness to be more significant for inauthenticity.

their own self-grounding being but also from the existentiell task of expressly taking over their own basis by authentically resolving on an ability-to-be.⁵⁰ In this way, the nullity in thrownness—its concealed whence—‘is the basis for the possibility of *inauthentic Dasein* in its falling’ (SZ: 285).

In fleeing from its concealed ground, inauthentic disclosing flees towards entities. Heidegger does not make clear why this strategy works for inauthentic disclosing, but understanding its flight as *from* its own impossible self-grounding gives us an important clue. Entities discovered are unlike Dasein’s disclosing in that they have clear and identifiable grounds. Even if their ontic causes or origins are uncertain (as are Dasein’s ontic causes), all entities (including Dasein) are grounded in being, by virtue of which they are. This makes entities very different from Dasein’s disclosing, which is mysteriously self-grounding. By orienting itself away from itself and towards second-plank unconcealing, or discovering, inauthentic disclosing orients itself towards grounding that it can make sense of: the be-ing of entities. In immersing itself in discovering entities, inauthentic disclosing can come to misunderstand itself as just like these other entities—where that means, just as unproblematically and securely grounded. This is the inauthentic correlate to the self-misunderstanding that we saw in Dasein’s ontological self-distancing (§13). Like that self-misunderstanding, it is made possible by Dasein’s falling absorption in entities, and so by the mystery and, ultimately, untruth or the backgrounding of the world.

It is not obvious to me why inauthentic discovering, as Heidegger describes it, should be a consequence of inauthentic disclosing.⁵¹ The latter is the flight from the concealed ground of disclosing, while the former is a discovering of entities that is superficial and led by the flattened ‘common sense’ of *das Man* rather than by entities themselves. I see no reason why these should be connected, and I suspect that this is one point in *Being and Time* where

⁵⁰ Heidegger also characterises inauthentic disclosing as a flight from death. However, the chapter on how anticipation of death is enacted in resoluteness is unclear on how these apparently different phenomena are to be unified (SZ: II.3).

⁵¹ Similarly, in ‘On the Essence of Truth’, Heidegger grounds ‘error’ in errancy without giving a clear account of this grounding (OET: 150/GA9: 197).

Heidegger's critique of his contemporary society latches onto what is otherwise a purely existential-existential analysis.

In any case, inauthentic disclosing is a concealing of the concealed ground of disclosing, or third-plank unconcealing. This compounded concealing is a third-plank form of *kruptesthai*, in which disclosing conceals its own ground and then conceals that concealment. It is, however, contingent, and in §21 I will consider what it takes to overcome it in authentic disclosing. First, however, another issue needs to be addressed. We have seen that Dasein is self-grounding in a way that conceals its ground. We have seen that entities (including Dasein) have a ground in being. But what about being itself? Does it have a concealed ground, as Dasein does? If so, that would be a further phenomenon of concealment at the third plank.

17. Being, a Ground Without Why

Inauthentic disclosing conceals or flees from the concealed ground of disclosing, in which disclosing uncannily grounds itself. I am exploring this self-grounding of disclosing on the assumption that there may be a correlated phenomenon in being. But Heidegger appears to say not that being has a concealed ground or is mysteriously self-grounding but instead that it has *no* ground. Being, as Heidegger puts it, is a ground without why (PR: 126/GA10: 185).

In *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger insists that being does not fall under the scope of the principle of sufficient reason, which holds that there must be a reason or ground—a 'why'—for everything.⁵² In fact, on Heidegger's interpretation, the principle of sufficient reason actually tells us that being does not fall under its scope, for it says that being is a ground that does not itself have a ground. Heidegger reaches this interpretation by ontologising the principle: to say that everything has a reason or ground is to say that no entity *is* without reason or ground. If nothing *is* without ground, then no *is-ing* occurs without a ground. An entity's *is-ing* (i.e., second plank

⁵² For an interpretation of Heidegger's overall argument in *The Principle of Reason*, see my 'The Resonant Principle of Reason'.

unconcealing) occurs only on the basis of being *qua* the is-ing of entities as such and as a whole (i.e., third plank unconcealing). So, being is the ground of the is-ing of entities and is thereby (as Heidegger usually puts the point) the ground of entities. To being ‘there belongs something like ground/reason. Being is akin to grounds [*grundartig*], it is ground-like [*grundhaft*]’ (PR: 49/GA10: 73, original italicised). Or, more strongly: ‘Being and ground/reason: the same’ (PR: 113/GA10: 169). Finally, it is because being is the ground of entities that it is ‘without why’: ‘Being, as what grounds, has no ground’ (PR: 114/GA10: 169).

On its face, this last step makes for a bad argument. It is false of grounds in general that *being* a ground precludes *having* a ground. But perhaps being the ground *of entities* makes being a ground of the sort that cannot have a ground. The principle of sufficient reason might be heard as saying not only that all entities have a ground but that *only* entities have a ground. Since being, as the ground of entities, cannot be an entity, it cannot have a ground. Heidegger does sometimes speak as if he had this sort of argument in mind, sliding from speaking of *all* entities having a ground to saying that *only* entities have a ground. For example: ‘Only entities have—and indeed necessarily—a ground/reason. An entity *is* an entity only when grounded’ (PR: 125/GA10: 184). But building this into the principle of sufficient reason from the start begs the question of whether being has a ground. Adding a few extra premises, however, produces a non-question-begging argument that establishes that only entities have a ground and that being cannot have a ground:

1. All entities have a ground. (The Principle of Sufficient Reason)
2. Being is not an entity. (The Ontological Difference)
3. Being is in fact the ground of entities. (Heidegger’s version of the Principle of Sufficient Reason)
4. Anything that is the ground of entities cannot have a ground.
5. Therefore being cannot have a ground. (From 3, 4)
6. There ‘are’ only entities and being.
7. Therefore only entities have a ground. (From 1, 2, 3, 4)

Clearly, the premise that is doing the work in this argument is premise four, which holds that being the ground of *entities* precludes having a ground. So, while it may be false in general that being a ground precludes having a ground, the claim here is that being an *ontological* ground precludes having a ground.

I believe that what is distinctive about an ontological ground is that it is supposed to be a regress-stopper.⁵³ At the outset of *Being and Time*, Heidegger formally indicates what he means by 'being' by saying that it is "that which determines entities as entities" (SZ: 6), that which (in some non-causal sense) 'makes' entities be that and what they are. 'Being' is supposed to name whatever it is that, *by itself*, accounts for entities. If being were to be grounded in something further, then it would account for entities only together with that further thing and not wholly by itself. And, if that something further were itself to have a ground, then all three together would account for entities, and so on. But an ontological ground is not supposed to allow for this sort of regress; it must itself be the sole ground of entities. (Or, what is the same, if there is a series of grounds that together account for entities being that and what they are, then this entire series must be what 'being' names and *that series* will not have a further ground.) So, it is not that *only* entities have a ground so much as that being is the *only* ground standing behind entities. Thus being, as the 'because' or ground of entities, is itself 'without "why", it has no ground, it is ground itself' (PR: 127/GA10: 186).

If this argument seems merely stipulative, that is in part because formal indications *are* stipulative. But also, consider premise six, which holds that there 'are' only entities and being. Heidegger's ontology is so sparsely furnished that there 'is' nothing else that *could* be the ground of being. (Grant this assumption for now. I discuss the clearing, temporality, and *das Ereignis* as potential grounds of being in §18 and §19.) According to the argument for Heidegger's claims in *The Principle of Reason*, if being were to have a ground,

⁵³ For an exploration of the third-man regress in Heidegger's thinking of being, and particularly in relation to the ontological difference, see my 'The Trouble with the Ontological Difference'.

that ground would have to be an entity. (This move is not an ontotheological violation of the ontological difference, since it does not identify being with an entity.) Of course, being does rest on an entity: Dasein. Both early and late, Heidegger holds that Dasein or the human being is the entity that makes possible the happening of being or *alētheia*: 'being, relative to the manifestation of being, *needs* the human being'.⁵⁴ Third-plank unconcealing thus rests on an entity, a second-plank phenomenon. But, as an entity, Dasein is not an ontological ground of being. It does not determine being as being. It is an ontic condition of possibility: an entity that must be in place in order for being, or third-plank unconcealing, to be able to take place. (World, and perhaps the work of art, are also ontic conditions of possibility for being.) Beyond Dasein, there is nothing else that could 'be' the ground of being. So, it seems that being has no ground.

From the fact that being has no ground, Caputo concludes that 'the very attempt to interrogate Being [...] must be surrendered'.⁵⁵ He takes this to be a core dimension of the 'mystical element' in Heidegger's thought:

[I]t seems to have been one of the decisive realizations of the later Heidegger, and so of the Heidegger who began more and more to take on a likeness to the mystics, that Being does not come as the 'answer' to a 'question'. It is the very attempt to interrogate Being, to make it give an account of itself to man, that must be surrendered. 'Questioning' submits to the demand in Leibniz's principle to render a sufficient reason. But Being, as we have seen, is without why; we must let Being lie forth of itself. Even the 'why' of the question of Being—why is there something rather than nothing?—must be given up. The 'why' must give way to 'because'. Being comes not as the answer to a question but

⁵⁴ Heidegger, in Richard Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 40. I chose this quote in particular because Heidegger goes on to explicitly address a likely objection to my claim—namely, that the later Heidegger thinks being as 'independent' of Dasein and rejects *Being and Time*'s approach as too Dasein-dependent. In this interview, Heidegger says: 'Thus, the question as to what extent I am concerned only with being, and have forgotten the human being, ought to be settled. One cannot pose a question about being without posing a question about the essence of the human being' (Heidegger, in Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 40).

⁵⁵ Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 164.

as a 'gift', a 'favour' (*Gunst*), which is bestowed upon man. Being is thought because Being 'gives itself to be thought'. We are endowed (*begabt*) with the gift (*Gabe*) of thought by Being itself.⁵⁶

But Caputo is too hasty here. That being escapes the principle of sufficient reason in that it does not have an ontological ground does not mean that we must surrender the quest for being's ground and merely accept being as a gift given. It does not mean that we should not ask 'why?' of being. For, something interesting happens when we do. To see what this is, consider the source of the phrase 'without why'.

The phrase 'without why' is proximally from a poem by the mystic poet Angelus Silesius. In *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger quotes part of the poem, beginning with this line: 'The rose is without why: it blooms because it blooms' (PR: 35/GA10: 53).⁵⁷ As Caputo shows, the phrase 'without why' has its ultimate origin in the German mystic Meister Eckhart's description of God as the 'innermost ground without why'.⁵⁸ Caputo argues that not only this phrase but Meister Eckhart's thought more generally is very much in the background of both Silesius's poem and Heidegger's argument in *The Principle of Reason*. Eckhart understands God as Aristotle's unmoved mover: thought thinking itself. God is 'without why' in the sense that (as Caputo explains) 'God requires no efficient cause to set Him into activity, nor does He act for the sake of any end outside of Himself. He is the cause and principle of all things, but He requires no cause or principle for Himself'.⁵⁹ While God presumably has a formal cause, lacking moving (i.e., efficient) and final causes renders Him 'without why'. No external source or purpose can or needs to be supplied in order to explain or justify His actions or existence.

⁵⁶ Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 164. Caputo gives in-text references throughout this passage, which I have removed.

⁵⁷ Silesius, *The Cherubinic Wanderer*, 54. Silesius also says that God 'love[s] also without why' (Silesius, *The Cherubinic Wanderer*, 118).

⁵⁸ '...God's ground is my ground and my ground is God's ground. Here I live on my own as God lives on His own....You should work all your works out of this innermost ground without why' (Eckhart, *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, 126–127, cited in Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 100).

⁵⁹ Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 108.

Nonetheless, God might be said to have an *internal* moving (and, presumably, final) cause: Himself. This 'ground without why' 'spring[s] up out of [its] own ground[.]'.⁶⁰ Eckhart finds this same sort of self-grounding in other phenomena, such as life and work. Caputo quotes him:

If someone asked life for a thousand years, 'why do you live?' then if it could answer, it would say nothing other than 'I live because I live' (*Ich lebe darum, dass ich lebe*). This is so because life lives out of its own grounds and wells up of [*sic*] itself. Consequently it lives without why by the fact that it lives for itself. If someone asked a truthful man who works out of his own ground, 'why do you work?' then if he answers rightly, he would say nothing other than 'I work because I work' (*Ich wirke darum, dass ich wirke*).⁶¹

Or again: 'Life means a certain overflow by which a thing, welling up within itself, first completely floods itself, each part of itself interpenetrating every other, before it pours itself out and wells over into something external.'⁶² By virtue of this self-effusion, God, life, and work are all without 'why' in the sense that they lack any external ground but are self-grounding.

Being or *phusis* is self-grounding in the same sort of way. *Phusis*, the emerging-abiding sway, wells up out of itself: it is 'what emerges from itself (for example, the emergence, the blossoming, of a rose), the unfolding that opens itself up' (EM: 15/GA40: 11). Like God, life, and work, *phusis* 'lives out of its own grounds'. So, too, does Dasein's disclosing, as we saw at the end of §15. Both attain themselves in self-presupposing leaps, in which they are mysteriously self-grounding and so ungrounded. This mysterious self-grounding

⁶⁰ Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 124.

⁶¹ Eckhart, *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, 127; cited in Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 123. Ian Alexander Moore suggests that this passage influenced early Heidegger's conception of factual life as living itself out of itself (Moore, *Eckhart, Heidegger, and the Imperative of Release*, 21).

⁶² Eckhart, *Meister Eckhart: Selected Treatises and Sermons*, 226; cited in Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 109. This welling over also apparently grounds creation. Caputo explains that 'God created the world, not out of any lack in Himself which He hoped to fill up (a "why")', but out of the welling up within Himself (*ebullitio*) of His own life which spills over into creatures' (Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 109).

is one in which ground is 'withheld' and its position 'left empty' (C: 300/GA65: 379), which makes it an abyssal ground (*Ab-grund*). The abyssal ground 'still grounds and yet does not properly [*eigentlich*] ground' (C: 300/GA65: 380).⁶³ It is both a ground and the lack of ground.

We saw that Dasein's self-grounding is manifest to it in the call of conscience and in posing the question of why it has not chosen itself. So too, being's effusive self-grounding shows up in response to a 'why' question. Unlike Caputo, then, I see no reason why this self-grounding should forbid the asking of the 'why' question (which is precisely the question that Heidegger goes on to ask after establishing *phusis* as self-emerging in *Introduction to Metaphysics*). Life only showed up to Eckhart as welling up out of itself after the 'why' question was asked 'for a thousand years'. If we did not ask the 'why' question, then we might know that God and *phusis* escape the principle of sufficient reason in the sense of not having an external moving cause or an ontological ground, respectively. But that does not by itself get us to self-grounding self-effusion. To get to this dimension of God and *phusis*, which the mystic and the philosopher respectively reach, we must persist in asking the 'why' question. We must not surrender it.

What we must surrender, however, is the expectation that it will be answered. Eckhart questions life for a thousand years not because he questions poorly or because life refuses to answer, but because the answer that it gives does not satisfy. A question that is fully answered dissolves; a question that is answered yet persists does so because the answer given does not meet the demands of the question. The question sought full clarity and what was given in answer to it retained obscurity. The question seeking being's ground is answered—being is self-grounding—and yet the obscurity of that answer means that being's ground shows up to the questioner as concealed. Heidegger makes the same point:

⁶³ In the section from which I quote, Heidegger positions time-space as this ground. I do not engage with the details of that argument, but see §19 for a discussion of temporality and *das Ereignis* as potential grounds of being.

‘It blooms, because it blooms’. This really says nothing, for the ‘because’ is supposed to supply something else, something we can understand as the reason for whatever is to be founded. But this apparently vacuous talk—‘it blooms because it blooms’—really [*eigentlich*] says everything, namely, it says everything there is to say here, doing so in its particular manner of not-speaking. (PR: 42–3 / GA10: 63)

It says that being has a concealed ground.⁶⁴ The concealing of its ground is the ‘withdrawal [*Entzug*] of the essential provenance of being as such,’ ‘contemporaneous’ with ‘the proffering of the lighting and clearing that furnishes a domain for the appearing of entities’ (PR: 88/GA10: 131). Thus it is a third-plank form of *kruptesthai*.

I argued in §15 that the ground of Dasein’s disclosing is concealed, and I have argued in this section that, correlatively, the ground of being is concealed. Both involve a mysterious sort of self-grounding. The two together mean that the ground of third-plank unconcealing is concealed. And that means that the ground of worlding is concealed: ‘the world’s worlding [*das Welten von Welt*] cannot be explained by anything else,’ presumably other than itself (TT: 179/GA7: 181). ‘This impossibility does not lie in the inability of our human thinking to explain and fathom in this way. Rather, the inexplicable and unfathomable character of the world’s worlding lies in this, that causes and grounds remain unsuitable for the world’s worlding’ (TT: 180/GA7: 181). So too, ‘[b]eing is the rejection of the role of such grounding; it renounces all grounding’ (NIV: 193/GA6.2: 252). *We* make sense of things by providing grounds for them, but this is inappropriate to third-plank unconcealing. Third-plank unconcealing has a concealed ground, in a manner that amounts to having no ground.

⁶⁴ Strictly, at this point in the text, the line from Silesius is taken to say that *entities* can be without sufficient reason while still rising up into appearing. It is only at the very end of the text that Heidegger attributes the ‘without why’ of the rose to being. Calling being *qua* third-plank unconcealing, ‘the play,’ Heidegger says:

Why does it play, the great child of the world-play Heraclitus brought into view in the *aiōn*? It plays, because it plays.

The ‘because’ withers away in the play. The play is without ‘why.’ It plays since it plays. It simply remains a play: the most elevated and the most profound.

(PR: 113/GA10: 169)

Plank Four

The Ground of Being?

I have argued that both being and Dasein's disclosing are self-grounding in a way that renders their grounds concealed. I have claimed that this is a form of *kruptesthai* (self-concealing) rather than a form of *kruptein* (other-concealing). It would be a form of *kruptein* if it were the case that the ground in question was something other than third-plank unconcealing. But I have argued that both disclosing and being have their ground in themselves, which makes the concealings in question forms of *kruptesthai*. One might object to this account of self-grounding by claiming that third-plank unconcealing *does* have an independent ground: it is grounded in the clearing, or in temporality, or in *das Ereignis*, the (appropriating) event. These are all apparent candidates for populating Wrathall's fourth plank of unconcealment, which is posited as the ground of third-plank unconcealing. In this section, I consider whether the clearing, temporality, or *Ereignis* is a counter-example to my claim that disclosing and being lack an independent ground and so to my characterisation of them as self-concealing. At stake is not only what belongs on the fourth plank but whether there is such a plank at all.

18. The Clearing

On his fourth plank of unconcealment, Wrathall situates the clearing, *die Lichtung*. I followed him in this when setting up the taxonomy in §2, although I have since associated the vocabulary of the clearing

with third-plank unconcealing. Specifically, I have taken the event of clearing to be the event of disclosing or being-in-the-world (unconcealing) and the cleared 'space' produced by that event to be the *da* or 'there' that is thereby opened up (unconcealment). But Wrathall has something quite different in mind for the clearing. He interprets it as a 'space of possibilities' that we must posit in order to make sense of the fact that there are various possible worlds or possible understandings of being.¹ These different possible understandings of being prevail (if they do prevail) in different places at different times, and the clearing is the 'space' within which such prevailing comes to pass (or not). We might think this clearing as analogous to a library holding various texts, only one of which can be checked out at any given time.

If we think of the clearing as containing all possible configurations of the world, then it resembles Thompson's second-plank 'withheld abundance' of meaning in entities, which he takes to be earth in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (§4).² At the fourth plank, what is withheld is an abundance of possible worlds. Notice, however, that the withheld abundance in entities results from a second-plank phenomenon of *krupstein*: when discovering an entity as *x*, something else is concealed—namely, alternative ways of discovering the entity. The same is true at the first plank: when, in speaking, we reveal an entity determinately to an interlocutor as *x*, the entity is thereby concealed as *y*. So too at the third plank: when disclosing or worlding takes place and some particular world obtains, something else is concealed—namely, the alternative worlds that might have obtained. The concealed worlds are not actual entities that are inaccessible to us; they are concealed in the sense that they are possible entities that could have been actual but are not. If this is a genuine form of concealing, then it is a third-plank form of *krupstein*.

Because this concealing is a form of *krupstein* rather than *krupsthai*, it cannot—contra Sandra Lee Bartky—be the self-concealing of being. Bartky explains what she takes it to mean when Heidegger says that being conceals itself or withdraws:

¹ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 14.

² I thank Melayna Schiff for helping me to see this point.

To say that Being withdraws in disclosing a world is to deny that Being can be exhausted in its epochs, in what it sends. But this is not to say that Being, the world-ground, is unknowable, a *noumenon*, whose relation to what-there-is would be forever unintelligible. To say that Being 'withdraws', that it is not exhausted in its epochs, is, I think, another way of saying that each world-disclosure is *finite*, that *something* remains after the shining forth of a 'lighted realm', even though this 'something' is nothing other than the possibility that a disclosure other than the disclosure which occurred might have occurred or might yet occur.³

It is not clear whether Bartky's 'something remaining' is a withheld plenitude or the mere possibility of an alternative, but—like Wrathall's clearing—it guarantees that any particular dispensation of being is only one dispensation among many possible dispensations. Bartky takes this singular status to be the finitude in being, for which Heidegger's talk of withdrawal is a metaphor. What withdraws, we may imagine, are the alternative epochs of being (or even just the possibility of such). The self-withdrawing or self-concealing of being is thus, according to Bartky, its withholding of (the possibility of) other possible dispensations of being. But what is concealed here are alternative epochs or worlds (or the possibility of such), not being or third-plank unconcealing itself. Thus this is a form of other-concealing or *kruptein* that obtains when third plank unconcealing does, and it is not a form of *kruptesthai* or self-concealing.

That we have returned to the question of the self-concealing of being underscores that the phenomenon that Wrathall has in mind for the fourth-plank essentially involves concealing. But it is supposed to be a form of *unconcealment*. It is hard, however, to see how Wrathall's clearing could be a form of unconcealment in the sense of something that has overcome a prior *lēthē*. Wrathall posits this fourth plank of unconcealment not because he has identified a further phenomenon that overcomes *lēthē* but because he takes his space

³ Bartky, 'Heidegger's Philosophy of Art', 266. Note that Bartky goes on to point out that what she takes Heidegger to be saying is not consistent with what she takes him to have said earlier in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' about the work of art.

of possibilities to be the condition of possibility of third-plank unconcealment: 'there must be a clearing that allows one way of being disposed to the world to come into operation, while withholding other potential ways of being disposed for the world'.⁴ Positing the space of possibilities is a way of making sense of the fact that when one world obtains, others do not and cannot. We make sense of this fact by imagining a library space housing all those alternative possibilities—and a librarian of being who 'allows' one world to be while 'withholding' the others.⁵ But this is merely an explanatory heuristic; there is no real sense in which *there is* such a space or agent. The clearing that Wrathall has in mind is not a genuine phenomenon.

Is there anything else that might be housed on this plank, as the unconcealing that grounds third-plank being, disclosing, and worlding?

19. Temporality and *das Ereignis*

In *Being and Time*, temporality is supposed to be the ground of both being and Dasein's disclosing and so the ground of third-plank unconcealing. Temporality is such a ground in two senses. First, it is the source of intelligibility of Dasein and of disclosing: 'the horizon for all understanding of being' (SZ: 17) and the meaning of care (SZ: 323). Second, at least in the case of Dasein's disclosing, temporality 'makes possible the unity of existence, facticity, and falling' (SZ: 328). Such an 'ontological source' (SZ: 334) looks like the right sort of candidate for the ground of third-plank unconcealing.

But temporality is not a fourth-plank phenomenon, and it is not because of the way in which it makes possible. It makes possible the unity or 'totality of the structure of care' (SZ: 328) in the sense that it is the underlying whole that holds the various elements of the care structure together. Another way to put this is to say that temporality is the structure of disclosing or that disclosing has a

⁴ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 33.

⁵ Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 33.

temporal structure. A structure makes something possible by giving it its distinctive form or shape. Accordingly, temporality has the same 'shape' as disclosing—including the 'shape' of its mysterious self-grounding. Temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) is the outside-of-itself that temporalises itself (*zeitigt sich*) or yields itself (*zeitigt sich*) (SZ: 328–9). Like being and disclosing, it emerges from itself and attains itself by leaping—or rather, by reaching into itself, in the unity of the temporal ecstases. So, the temporal analysis of Dasein's disclosing does not provide an independent, fourth-plank ground for disclosing but reiterates and clarifies disclosing's self-grounding character. As for temporality as that which makes being intelligible, it is presumably self-grounding in the same way—although that account was never given.

Heidegger never provided the temporal interpretation of being promised in *Being and Time* and he abandoned temporality until the very end of his career. In 1962's 'Time and Being', Heidegger returns to time—but not as the horizon for all understanding of being. Instead, both being and time are held to 'determine each other reciprocally' (TB: 3/GA14: 7) and are said to have their common 'source' in *das Ereignis*, the event (TB: 15, 22/GA14: 19, 27). Heidegger identifies *Ereignis* with the 'It' that gives being in the phrase 'it gives being', which we are forced to deploy since we cannot say that being 'is' (TB: 5/GA14: 9). Instead of saying that being 'is', we say that *there is being*; in German, *es gibt Sein*, it gives being. The grammar of this phrase asserts an 'It' that gifts being, which is *Ereignis*. '[T]he It that gives in "It gives being", "It gives time", proves to be Appropriation [*das Ereignis*]' (TB: 19/GA14: 24). Apparently, it is *Ereignis* that is the ground of being.

But the text of 'Time and Being' is not as clear about this claim as my summary suggests; it is full of doubt and uncertainty. Heidegger worries that the 'It' is merely a grammatical illusion (TB: 17–18/GA14: 23) and he refuses to discuss its status any further (TB: 18/GA14: 23), saying only that we should think the It wholly in terms of its giving (TB: 19/GA14: 24). If there might not be an It but only an act of giving, then this giving need be nothing other than the happening of being or third-plank unconcealing. In that case, *Ereignis* would not be the ground of being but would be the same as

being itself. Indeed, Heidegger claims that ‘the sole purpose of this lecture was to bring before our eyes being itself [*Sein selbst*] as the event of Appropriation [*das Ereignis*]’ (TB: 21/GA14: 26). There remains a question about what ‘as’ means here, and Heidegger wonders whether *Ereignis* belongs to being or being to *Ereignis* (TB: 21/GA14: 26). But *Ereignis* is not clearly posited as the ground of being.

In 1936–1938’s *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, *Ereignis* is said to ground not being but Dasein: ‘Da-sein [...] is grounded abysally in the event [*das Ereignis*]’ (C: 220/GA65:280). But, as with temporality, it is important to understand precisely what type of ground *Ereignis* is.⁶ Heidegger says that *Ereignis* is a ‘turning [that] essentially occurs in between the call (to the one that belongs) and the belonging (of the one that is called)’ (C: 323/GA65: 407). Daniela Vallega-Neu explains that *Ereignis* or ‘[e]nowning occurs as turning in-between beyng’s own enowning call and Dasein’s enowned belonging.’⁷ This turning is a mutual appropriation in which, as Polt puts it, ‘we make being our own at the same time as it makes us its own.’⁸ *Ereignis* is the interfacing between disclosing and being, the two correlated dimensions of third-plank unconcealing. These two phenomena need each other in order to occur, and their coming-into-relationship is the event that allows third-plank unconcealing to obtain: *Ereignis*. Or rather—the coming-into-relationship of being and disclosing, *Ereignis*, is the happening of third-plank unconcealing. Third-plank unconcealing happens as being brings itself about (in relation to disclosing) and disclosing brings itself about (in relation to being). We can address that happening as a phenomenon of being, as a phenomenon of disclosing, or as a

⁶ My aim here is not to give a full interpretation of *Ereignis* and the difficult text of *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* but only to say enough to plausibly situate *Ereignis* with regard to the planks of the taxonomy. Thus what I say is necessarily schematic and—hopefully—as accommodating of different interpretations of *Ereignis* as possible. (One interpretation that is excluded is Capobianco’s. Capobianco thinks that ‘*Ereignis* conveys the simple and quiet but also profound and astonishing “coming to pass” of all things, such as the plum or cherry tree coming into luxuriant bloom’ (Capobianco, *Heidegger’s Way of Being*, 21). This interpretation places *Ereignis* on the second plank, as the unconcealing of particular entities in discovering. I think that this is a mistake and that *Ereignis* is a third-plank phenomenon).

⁷ Vallega-Neu, ‘Poietic Saying’, 72.

⁸ Polt, *The Emergence of Being*, 52.

phenomenon of coming-into-relation or correlation. *Ereignis* names the latter.

Accordingly, as with being and Dasein, *Ereignis* happens as a leaping (e.g., C: 219/GA65: 278, C: 318/GA65: 401; cf. the gifting in 'Time and Being' and the temporalising of temporality in *Being and Time*). In its leap, *Ereignis* brings itself about, as the coming-into-relationship of being and disclosing, in which being and disclosing both ground themselves. If this is right, then *Ereignis* is not a happening other than disclosing's and being's own self-grounding. It is not, contra Sheehan, a '*tertium quid*.'⁹ It is not even a genuine ground but an abyssal one: 'The abyssal ground [*Ab-grund*] is the hesitant self-withholding of the ground' because 'the ground, even and precisely as abyss, still grounds and yet does not properly ground' (C: 300/GA65: 380). This makes it self-concealing (C: 300/GA65: 379). This self-concealing belongs to the *kruptesthai* that I have attributed to both being's and disclosing's self-grounding.

Like that of temporality, the concept of *Ereignis* illuminates the manner in which third-plank unconcealing is self-grounding.¹⁰ This structure or manner is a ground in the sense that a formal cause is a cause: it spells out what makes something be what it is. What makes being and disclosing what they are is, perhaps, their temporal structure—or perhaps the coming-into-relation in which they each bring themselves about. Because *Ereignis* and temporality ground in this sort of way, neither is an independent ground that

⁹ Sheehan, 'Kehre and Ereignis', 15. Polt concurs: "'Enowning' [...] does not denote something beyond or separate from be-ing but rather the distinctive way in which be-ing holds sway or essentially happens (*west*)" (Polt, 'The Event of Enthinking the Event', 82). Sheehan holds that what "brings together and thus makes possible both givenness [i.e., being] and its dative [i.e. disclosing]"—that is, *Ereignis*—must be "beyond or otherwise than what it brings together" (Sheehan, 'Kehre and Ereignis', 15, my insertions). (He later claims that *Ereignis* or "appropriation and the clearing [i.e., disclosedness] are not two different things. Ex-sistence, precisely as appropriated, is the dis-closed clearing" (Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 255, my insertion).)

¹⁰ My discussion of *Ereignis* considers only two of the three stages of Heidegger's thinking of *Ereignis* that Polt identifies (Polt, 'Ereignis'). Polt distinguishes *Ereignis* as incorporating an entity into our meaningful world (in the 1919 lecture course, *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*), as the happening of being (in 1936–1938's *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*), and as the source of time and being (in 1962's 'Time and Being'). I did not consider the first because incorporating an entity into our meaningful world is a second-plank phenomenon (namely, discovering) and so is not a candidate for unconcealing at the fourth plank.

might belong on the fourth-plank and serve as a counter-example to my account of third-plank unconcealing as self-grounding.

20. The Fourth Plank

As this point, we might be wondering what sort of thing we should be looking for when we seek potential fourth-plank phenomena of unconcealing and unconcealment. What is this fourth plank supposed to be, anyway? As we saw, Wrathall posits the fourth plank of unconcealment as the condition of possibility or ground of third-plank unconcealing. The second and third planks are also conditions of possibility, respectively, of their numerically lower neighbouring planks. Determining in what sense they are so will help me to determine what sort of ground fourth-plank unconcealing is supposed to be, and whether whatever might populate this ground stands as a counter-example to my characterisation of being and disclosing as self-grounding.

The unconcealing at the first plank is the revealing of an entity in a determinate way (as *x*) to an interlocutor through speaking. It is made possible by the unconcealing at the second plank, which is the entity showing up meaningfully as *x* to a case of Dasein who discovers it in comporting. We can see that the former unconcealing depends on the latter in that, intuitively, I can (deliberately) draw someone's attention to a determinate feature of an entity only if I am already oriented towards it myself (or have been previously). According to Heidegger, the reason for this is that the apophantic 'as' of asserting (which communicates the entity as *x*) is derived from, and so depends on, the hermeneutic 'as' of comporting (which discovers the entity as *x*) (SZ: 158). (The details of the relationship between speaking and comporting are disputed, as I mentioned in §9.) So, second-plank unconcealing is the condition that has to be in place for uncovering an entity to an interlocutor through speaking to be possible. I must be discovering in order to be able to speak.

Similarly for the relation between second-plank discovering and its ground in third-plank unconcealing (being, disclosing, worlding). In terms of being, the point is intuitive: in order to encounter

any particular entity in its that-being and what-being, I need to be open to entities as a whole and as such. The account of disclosing gives the reason for this. I cannot discover entities in comporting towards them unless I am disclosing because disclosing opens the world (i.e., signifies) and the world, which includes the totality of involvements, is that in terms of which I make sense of entities when I discover them. Just as I needed access to the hermeneutic 'as' in order to use the apophantic 'as', so too I need to be disclosing and so 'have' a world in order to be able to make sense of entities in terms of it. Disclosing is the condition that must be in place in order for it to be possible for me to encounter entities as that and what they are.

The unconcealings at the second and third planks are thus conditions of possibility: independent conditions that must obtain in order for something to be possible. A fourth plank of unconcealing must be the same sort of thing: a form of unconcealing that must obtain in order for third-plank unconcealing to be possible. We can see now why temporality and *Ereignis* are not, in the end, suitable candidates for the fourth-plank. Temporality is the structure of disclosing, in terms of which it is intelligible and which makes it possible in the way that a formal cause does. It is not an independent condition that makes disclosing possible. *Ereignis* is the happening of third-plank unconcealing, as the coming-into-relationship and coming-into-themselves of being and disclosing. But it is not an independent condition that makes possible. Neither is a candidate for fourth-plank unconcealing.

We can now also see why no genuine candidate for fourth-plank unconcealing could be a counter-example to my account of third-plank unconcealing as self-grounding: the type of ground that the fourth plank is supposed to afford is different from the type of ground that unconcealing lacks by virtue of its self-grounding. Recall that this self-grounding is the unsatisfactory answer to a 'why' question: why are there entities instead of nothing? Or, regarding disclosing, it is the unsatisfactory answer to a 'whence' question: from what ground is disclosing thrown into its that-it-is? The sort of ground that these 'why' and 'whence' questions ask after is not a condition of possibility. The questions would not be

answered by a fourth plank of unconcealing—just as the question, ‘why are you speaking rather than remaining silent?’ (‘from whence comes the fact of your speaking?’) is not answered by appeal to the hermeneutic ‘as’ that makes possible the apophantic ‘as’. These questions ask for something like a moving cause: what drives one to speak rather than to remain silent? What sets off unconcealing’s battle to overcome *lēthē*? We saw in §17 that, for Meister Eckhart, ‘God requires no efficient cause to set Him into activity.’¹¹ So too, being and disclosing—and *Ereignis* and temporality—have no independent moving cause but ‘spring up out of their own grounds.’¹² Their self-grounding is not the absence of a condition of possibility but the lack of an independent moving cause. *That* is what ‘ground’ means when we speak of these phenomena as self-grounding.

So is there any reason to posit a fourth plank at all? Is there any phenomenon of fourth-plank unconcealing or unconcealment? I see no reason to think that there is. Until a genuine phenomenon of unconcealing is identified that is the condition of possibility of third-plank unconcealing, the fourth plank serves no purpose. Thus I strike it from the taxonomy. (See Appendix.) I leave it present under erasure, however, as an artifact of our distinctive and relentless sense-making quest to provide grounds, including conditions of possibility, for everything that we encounter.

Having dispensed with the fourth plank of unconcealing, I can now return to the third plank and its mysterious self-grounding so as to complete the taxonomy and determine in what sense being is self-concealing.

¹¹ Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought*, 108.

¹² Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought*, 124.

Plank Three

Being and Disclosing, Part II

In the quest to identify being's self-concealing, I have explored the correlated concealings of the ground of Dasein's disclosing and the ground of being. In each case, the ground in question is not a condition of possibility but instead something like a moving cause—the answer to the question, 'why did being or disclosing happen rather than not?'. We have seen that the only possible answer to this question is some version of 'because it brought itself about'. This answer supplies a ground by positing disclosing or being as its own ground, but since it is unclear how disclosing or being could bring itself about, supplying such a ground amounts to offering a concealed ground—or even no ground at all. Saying that disclosing and being are self-grounding, that they lack a ground, and that they have a concealed ground all say the same thing.

If we think being and disclosing as having a concealed ground, then we are led to ask: can this concealment be overcome and a ground for third-plank unconcealing be identified? Heidegger's repeated insistence that being has no ground or is abyssally grounded suggests not. If this is right, then the concealment that this self-concealing produces will not come to count as a form of *lēthē*₂ that is overcome in a subsequent (presumably philosophical) *alētheuein*₂. (More on this in §25.) What can be overcome, however, is the inauthentic flight from the concealed ground of disclosing. Overcoming this is authentic disclosing. I will discuss this unconcealing briefly (§21) and then I will explore the final way in which disclosing is concealed from itself—namely, in the obscurity of the whither or to-which (as opposed to the whence, or from-which)

of thrownness (§22). A correlated concealing can be found in being. Identifying that concealing will allow me to capture the full phenomenon of the self-concealing of being and show how this phenomenon makes sense of what both interpreters and Heidegger have said about it (§23, §24).

21. Authentic Disclosing

As we saw in §16, inauthentic disclosing is the concealing flight from the concealed ground of disclosing (i.e., the whence of thrownness). This concealing (fleeing, absorbing) produces a concealment (fallenness, absorption in entities), which can be overcome in a subsequent unconcealing₂ or *alētheuein*₂: authentic disclosing. Because it is overcome in this way, the concealment in question (fallenness, absorption) will be a form of *lēthē*₂. (Of course, the primary phenomenon of *lēthē* at the third plank remains the nothing.) Such *lēthē*₂ is overcome in anticipatory resoluteness, which involves anticipating death, hearing the call of conscience, and taking over thrownness and its concealed whence (SZ: 325).

In §8, we saw that overcoming inauthentic discovering involves two stages: recognising that one has been discovering inauthentically, and so overcoming ambiguity, and then overcoming inauthentic discovering by discovering entities authentically. The two steps are necessary because the concealing that belongs to inauthentic discovering was compounded by ambiguity, which concealed the concealing. There is no such compounded concealing in the case of inauthentic disclosing, as far as I can tell. Dasein is brought back from its flight towards entities, which have a clear ground in being, and it is exposed to its own concealed ground in one fell swoop. This happens in the call of conscience, which calls Dasein back to the nullity at its ground. The call is 'attuned by angst' (SZ: 277) and so calls from angst, which suggests that hearing the call of conscience is the same as experiencing angst.

In *Being and Time*, angst reveals the world in its worlding, as distinct from innerworldly entities and as a component of Dasein's being as being-in-the-world or disclosing. Dasein is brought back

from its immersion in entities grounded in being; angst ‘moves out of the way everything which conceals [*jede Verdeckung von*] the fact that Dasein has been abandoned to itself’ (SZ: 308). The entities to which inauthentic disclosing directs itself fall away and instead the world as ‘nothing’—no innerworldly entity—reveals itself (SZ: 186). World shows itself in its worldhood (SZ: 187), or rather, worlding, and Dasein is exposed to that worlding, as part of its own being-in-the-world, as thrown from a concealed whence. It experiences its own thrown ground, in its concealedness. This experience of angst is thus an experience of authentic disclosing, overcoming the concealment that made Dasein inauthentic, which concealment is thus an instance of *lēthē*₂.

In ‘What is Metaphysics?’, angst also encounters disclosing’s concealed ground and so brings Dasein to authentic disclosing. There, angst asks the question of why there are entities, as such and as a whole, rather than nothing. ‘Entities as such and as a whole’ refers to world, and the ‘why’ question asks why world should be at all: why does worlding obtain? Thus the ‘why’ part of the question asks after the ground of third-plank disclosing. It reveals only a concealed ground or abyss. The very fact that there are intelligible entities as such and as a whole—that worlding or disclosing is at all—is shown to lack a ground. But the why question is internally complex, making angst’s disclosing complex. As we saw, the ‘nothing’ is the non-intelligibility that obtains in the absence of disclosing and so third-plank *lēthē*. Thus angst also reveals third-plank *lēthē*. But what about the remaining part of the question—the ‘rather than’? This brings us to the whither of thrownness, which—like the whence—is concealed, in yet another instance of third-plank *kruptesthai*.

22. The Concealing of the Whither of Thrownness

In asking, ‘Why are there entities at all rather than nothing?’, angst asks after the ground (*qua* impetus) of disclosing (‘why’) and contrasts that disclosing to its alternative, *lēthē* (nothing). In this section, I consider the ‘rather than’ part of the question and argue that it

reveals the concealed whither of thrownness. We saw in §15 that the finitude of disclosing lies in the fact that ‘the “whence” and “whither” [of disclosing’s *that it is*] remain in darkness [*im Dunkel*]’ (SZ: 134). By considering the darkness of this whither, I will—finally—be able to bring to the self-concealing of being its proper brightness.

The whence of thrownness is the ground or origin of the ‘throw’ of thrownness, *from which* Dasein is thrown. The whither of thrownness is the destination of the ‘throw’: that *to which* Dasein is thrown. Dasein is thrown *into*, and so *to*, its being as disclosing.¹ To say that this is concealed is to say that disclosing—third-plank unconcealing—is concealed. But this is manifestly not the case. Dasein’s disclosing is always a self-disclosing; it always grasps itself. Further, we have been discussing disclosing at some length. The claim cannot be that disclosing is simply concealed but must be that it is concealed in some special respect. I will argue that it is *ultimately* concealed, and that it is so because we cannot grasp what it is *rather than*.²

As we know, the *rather than* of disclosing is *lēthē*. *Lēthē* is the absence of the illumination of Dasein’s disclosing. As we saw in §12, *lēthē* is only ever encountered privatively, in the comparison of our openness with animals’ captivation, or liminally, in the mood of angst. As Heidegger explains in ‘What is Metaphysics?’, the nothing is repelling (*abweisend*) or nihilating (*nichtend*) (WM: 90/GA9: 114). It resists Dasein’s encounter. Rather than showing itself as wholly other to disclosing, it ‘is encountered at one with entities as a whole’ (WM: 90/GA9: 113). These entities pick up the reflection of the nothing’s deflected alterity, showing themselves as strange: the nothing ‘manifests these entities in their full but heretofore concealed strangeness as what is radically other—with respect to the nothing’ (WM: 90/GA9: 114). The nothing or *lēthē* shows up

¹ Recall that Dasein is thrown into existence (SZ: 276) or the *da* (SZ: 135, 148, 297, 413); it is ‘delivered over’ (*überantworten*) to its being (SZ: 42, 135), itself (SZ: 144, 192, 284, 383), itself in its being (SZ: 189), existence (SZ: 276), and the *da* (SZ: 148). Some people take Dasein to be thrown *into* nature, the environment, or its body. For an argument against this sort of interpretation, see my entry on ‘Thrownness (*Geworfenheit*)’ in *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon*, ed. Wrathall.

² I argue the same more generally in my ‘Situation and Limitation: Making Sense of Heidegger on Thrownness’.

to us only indirectly, in the strangeness of the fact of the world and its worlding.

Let me put the point in the vocabulary of *alētheia*. *Lēthē* is the positive term presupposed by the privative phenomenon of *alētheuein*, the happening of unconcealing. Unconcealing takes place as a struggle with *lēthē*, in which *lēthē* is overcome. Heidegger's analysis of angst claims that there is a mode of unconcealing in which that unconcealing turns back towards the overcome *lēthē*. But, rather than uncovering that *lēthē*—which, after all, it cannot do without destroying it—unconcealing encounters it indirectly in the surprise and wonder at its own victory over *lēthē*. Disclosing's attempt to access its other yields only marvelling at itself.

The second best access to *lēthē* is through the animal, which dwells in *lēthē*. As we saw in §12, we cannot access *lēthē* directly through the animal but can reach it through a 'privative interpretation' (SZ: 50): we try to subtract our own disclosing from ourselves in order to encounter the *lēthē* that the animal dwells in.³ (This *lēthē* is qualitatively the same as, but not numerically identical to, the *lēthē* that precedes disclosing, as I argued in §12.) In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger calls his method for accessing the animal's being 'transposition'. Transposing ourselves into the animal is possible because we have a world and the animal both 'has and yet does not have world' (FCM: 210/GA29/30: 309). This is to say, as I have put it, that the animal has a world-analogue. This world-analogue allows us to transpose ourselves into the animal—yet only within limits. 'The animal displays a sphere of transposability or, more precisely, the animal itself is this sphere, one which nonetheless refuses any going along with' (FCM: 211/GA29/30: 309). We can transpose ourselves into the animal's world-analogue and experience the sense in which it has something like an access to entities, but we cannot transpose ourselves into the animal's *not* having of world, its *lēthē*. Like the nothing, this refuses and repels us.

³ Strictly, the passage at SZ: 50, like that at SZ: 194, discusses not the animal specifically but life more generally. In *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger makes the same point in relation to the animal specifically (BPP: 191/GA24: 271).

Heidegger holds that his investigation of the animal still succeeds in clarifying Dasein's disclosing (which he calls 'world-forming'), since it reveals that '[t]he manifestness of entities as such, of entities *as* entities, belongs to world' (FCM: 274/GA29/30: 397). This is an important positive result. But notice that what the investigation has failed to do is to grasp the animal's *lêthê* as wholly other than Dasein's disclosing. So too, angst and *alêtheia* fail to grasp what is wholly other than themselves. This does not mean that they do not grasp themselves at all, or that Heidegger's investigation has failed. But it does mean that disclosing remains in some respect concealed. For, to understand something completely requires grasping that thing in light of the alterity of a contrast case or alternative. You have to grasp what something is *not* in order to wholly grasp what it is. Heidegger relies on this in his lectures on Hölderlin's 'Ister', where he riffs on the idea that '[c]oming to be at home is [...] a passage through the foreign' (HI: 49/GA53: 60). The idea is that you can only ever truly understand what is your own through an encounter with what is other. If disclosing cannot grasp its alternative in *lêthê*, then there is a sense in which it remains concealed from itself. Something of it is inaccessible—although precisely *what* is difficult to express. It is not that there is some portion or aspect of disclosing that is hidden, such that disclosing is partially manifest to itself and partially concealed from itself. It is not that something that belongs to it but is yet distinct from it is obscure, as was the case with the concealed ground of disclosing. It is rather that disclosing will in some sense forever exceed its own range because it cannot make sense of its own other without destroying the alterity of that other. This is what I meant by saying that disclosing is *ultimately* concealed.

The whither of thrownness is concealed when disclosing tries to grasp itself in its *rather than*. It always fails and so is concealed from itself. This is a form of *kruptesthai*: simultaneous self-concealing. Not everything is concealed in it—and in fact, its self-concealing is always manifest to disclosing in its very surprise at itself. As we saw in angst, the attempt to grasp the nothing in its alterity rebounds and reveals instead the surprising fact that disclosing is, rather than nothing. Angst turns into wonder.

And that wonder turns into philosophising, in the sense of explicitly attempting to identify the grounds of disclosing and being. Heidegger claims that

[o]nly when the strangeness of entities oppresses us does it arouse and evoke wonder. Only on the ground of wonder—the manifestness of the nothing—does the ‘why?’ loom before us. Only because the ‘why’ is possible as such can we in a definite way inquire into grounds and ground things. (WM: 95 / GA9: 121)

It is because *lêthê* is repelling and inaccessible, and so because the whither of thrownness is ultimately concealed, that we wonder at the fact that entities are rather than not—that disclosing is rather than not—and on the basis of that wonder we inquire into grounds. We philosophise because we are ultimately opaque to ourselves and so always capable of surprising ourselves.

23. Rather and Other than Being

I have argued that disclosing’s inability to access what it is *rather than*—namely, *lêthê*—conceals it from itself, albeit ultimately rather than wholly. Being unable to access what something is *rather than* amounts to a concealing because it is a failure to wholly uncover that thing in contrast to what it is not. In this section I argue that being is concealed in just the same way—and in several further, related ways. These together will constitute the self-concealing of being.

Notice, first, that disclosing and being, as third-plank unconcealing, share their *rather than*. Just as disclosing is rather than *lêthê*, so too being is rather than *lêthê*. *Lêthê*, or what ‘What is Metaphysics?’ calls ‘the nothing,’ ‘does not remain the indeterminate opposite of entities but unveils itself as belonging to the being of entities’ (WM: 94/GA9: 120) as its *rather than*. Since *lêthê* belongs to being and cannot be brought into the scope of being as unconcealing, its inaccessibility amounts to a concealing of being. In this sense, being is ultimately inaccessible to unconcealing *qua* disclosing. And since it is the very happening of being that renders its *rather than*

inaccessible, this is a form of self-concealing—third-plank *kruptesthai*. It is correlated with the concealing of the whither of disclosing's being thrown.

Perhaps surprisingly, I think that it is this inability to access being's *rather than* that commentators are trying to get at when describing being's backgrounding in terms of its pervasiveness, familiarity, and atmospheric quality (§14). These descriptions all (more or less explicitly) tried to express the fact that we cannot get a contrast case for being into view. Consider Polt:

The experience of a whole as such requires a space that, paradoxically, is not contained within the whole. The verge of this space is the boundary that defines the whole, that allows it to be a 'well-rounded sphere' (Parmenides, frag. 8). This limit divides what is from what is not.⁴

The point of positing being as a whole is to show that we cannot access its 'edges', where it stops and where its *rather than* begins. Similarly, Dreyfus: 'Since it is invisible and global, our current understanding of being seems to have no contrast class.'⁵ But Dreyfus's 'since' gets the explanation wrong. It is not that being has no contrast class *because* it is global and invisible. Rather, we cannot access any contrast class because of the way that third-plank unconcealing works, and some interpreters try to *express* that by saying that such unconcealing is invisible and global. They also try to express it by talking about being as the ultimate presupposition, or as a sort of ground that we cannot see while we are standing on it. But trying to figure out what of being these metaphors track, as I did in §14, was a mistake, because they are not tracking anything. Instead, they are evocative images for the fact that third-plank unconcealing, by its very nature, cannot unconceal what it is rather than—namely, *lēthē*. That means that disclosing cannot ultimately grasp either itself or being. And that means that being is concealed.

Now notice, second, that not all contrast cases are *rathers than*. Some are instead *others than*. Most things, for instance, are other

⁴ Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 25.

⁵ Dreyfus, 'Heidegger's Ontology of Art', 409.

than their grounds. Being, as we know, is not—in a rather complicated way. On the one hand, as we saw in §17, being has no ground, and it cannot have a ground (PR: 111/GA10: 166) because it is supposed to be the first and last ground. On the other hand, we cannot make sense of things without giving them grounds, so we posit an impossible self-grounding, in which being is its own ground in a mysterious welling up out of itself. The mystery of this self-grounding is the concealing of the ground of being, which is correlated with the concealing of the whence of thrownness. But there is also a correlate here to the concealing of the whither of thrownness, in that we try to set being off from a ground that is other than it, and we fail. We cannot grasp it in its *other than* a ground. Once again, we cannot see being's 'edges,' as it were, and in this way it is concealed.

Unlike being, entities do have grounds. An entity showing up in its that- and what-being is brought into its appearing by Dasein, and it has its condition of possibility in Dasein's disclosing, worlding, and the being of entities as a whole and as such (third-plank unconcealing). Being appears to lack the latter sort of ground, insofar as there does not seem to be a fourth-plank condition of possibility for it. It lacks the former sort of ground insofar as it is self-grounding in the way that I have explained. That entities have grounds while being does not is perhaps one dimension of the ontological difference, which is the distinction between being and entities (BPP: 17/GA24: 22).⁶ That being differs from and so is other than entities is yet another *other than* that we cannot grasp.

Recall that we could not grasp being in distinction from its ground or in distinction from *lêthê* because both *lêthê* and the ground of being are ungraspable. The same does not apply here. We can grasp what being is other than—we encounter entities all the time! What we cannot access, according to Heidegger, is being's *being other than* entities. It is not the other term of the distinction but the very distinction itself that escapes us: '[t]hough the two elements of the difference, that which is present [i.e., entities] and presencing [i.e., being], disclose themselves, they do not do so as different' (A: 275/GA5: 364–5). (Thus the 'not' of the ontological

⁶ Thanks to Filippo Casati for drawing my attention to this point.

difference, which holds that being is not an entity, differs from the repelling ‘not’ of the nothing, which repels disclosing (OEG: 97/GA9: 123).)

Of course, I did just articulate one dimension of the difference between being and entities: the fact that entities have grounds while being does not. But if being’s ungrounded self-grounding is concealed and mysterious, then so too must be the difference from entities that it makes for. More generally, we can see how hard it is to grasp the difference between being and entities in the fact that we consistently lapse into treating being as an entity—including by trying to ground it. When Heidegger himself comes to supply the reason that we cannot understand the distinction between being and entities, he says that ‘the difficulty does not lie in first determining the *kind* of distinction, rather we are already unsure and at a loss to begin with, when we wish merely to attain the field or *dimension* in which to make the distinction’ (FCM: 356/GA29/30: 517–18). Drawing any distinction requires first that we draw things together in commonality before we differentiate them. Thus the Platonic and Aristotelian theories of definition, for example, involve first a *synthesis* or bringing together, in which similar things (e.g., members of a genus) are collected, and then a *diairesis* or division in which those things are set off from one another (as, e.g., distinct species). But we cannot distinguish being and entities in this way, for there is no obvious commonality that brings them together. What is ‘the field or *dimension* in which to make the distinction’ (FCM: 356/GA29/30: 518)? Heidegger had originally hoped to find this in time: ‘temporality makes possible the distinguishability between being and entities’ (BPP: 18/GA24: 23). But he abandons this project and eventually worries that the ‘horizon’ for the ontological difference, as something beyond being, ‘cannot appear as an explicit theme for ontology’ (FS: 25/GA15: 310). In that case, then, the ontological difference must remain ‘a *completely obscure* [völlig dunkle[]] *distinction*’ (FCM: 356/GA29/30: 518).⁷

If the ontological difference is obscure, then being is also obscure, as *other than* entities. When the ontological difference ‘collapses’ and

⁷ For more on this obscurity, see my ‘The Trouble with the Ontological Difference.’

'remains forgotten,' then 'being, together with its essence, its difference from the entity, keeps to itself' (A: 275/GA5: 364). Heidegger calls this the 'oblivion [*Vergessenheit*] of being' and says that this '[o]blivion of being belongs to that essence of being which it itself conceals [*das durch sie selbst verhüllte Wesen des Seins*]' (A: 275/GA5: 364). It belongs to being to be self-concealing in its distinction from entities. The ontological difference, as a difference that we cannot access, renders being concealed.

It also renders disclosing concealed, and this in a new way. For the distinction between being and entities is not something that happens between those two alone and that leaves out disclosing. Distinguishing between being and entities is, in fact, originary transcending (OEG: 106/GA9: 135) or disclosing. Thus the ontological difference belongs to Dasein's being: 'we are always already moving *within the distinction as it occurs*. It is not *we* who make it, rather *it* happens *to us* as the fundamental occurrence of our Dasein [...] *fundamentally* and constantly' (FCM: 357/GA29/30: 519, cf. BPP: 319/GA24: 454, NIV: 153/GA6.2: 207, NIV: 184/GA6.2: 242). The happening of disclosing 'is' the happening of this ontological difference. So, if this difference is concealed, then so too is disclosing concealed from itself. Disclosing joins being in oblivion.

The oblivion is not total. Being still shines out, in distinction from entities, and disclosing still discloses itself. But both are concealed at the edges, with respect to that which they are *other than*—entities, ground, and *lêthê*. With respect to disclosing, the latter two produce the concealed whence and whither of disclosing's thrown *that it is*. The same sorts of concealing will also afflict worlding, which likewise cannot be grasped in its distinction from *lêthê*, has no independent ground (§17), and is other than entities—although Heidegger tends not to put any of these points in the vocabulary of worlding.

So, by exploring the phenomena of third-plank *kruptesthai* in disclosing's concealed whence and whither, we have come to see the sense in which being is concealed. I have argued that, not showing up in distinction from anything else, being is not set off against any alterity. It has no edges. I have also suggested that this is what some of the metaphors that I discussed in §14 were attempting to express.

It remains to return to the claims made in that section about the backgrounding of being, as well as to Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus's claim that *phusis* loves *kruptesthai* (§3), to see if we can now make better sense of them.

24. The Self-Concealing of Being

In §14, I considered the claim that being is backgrounded when entities show up. This idea resolved itself into a modified version of the law of presence: presencing, or third-plank unconcealing, does not come to presence in the way that entities do. Thus, third-plank unconcealing differs from second-plank unconcealing. But I had trouble identifying exactly what this difference was. Some passages suggested that the difference consists in the manner in which third-plank unconcealing is self-concealing. Now, I can identify that distinctive self-concealing.⁸

If being is concealed in its *others than*, then it is an unconcealing that is very different from the uncovering of entities. As we saw in §4, when entities show up, they show up in their being as that and what they are. This is to say that they show up as grounded, in their being; they show up in their being *that* they are, rather than not; and they show up in their being *what* they are, rather than some other sort of thing. They show up as distinguished from a ground, a *rather than*, and an other (or, more accurately, multiple others). These *others than* are what give entities determinacy, as entities that

⁸ Note that clarifying the distinction between third-plank unconcealing and second-plank unconcealing does not amount to illuminating the ontological difference between being and entities, because the two distinctions do not map onto one another. One of the terms of the distinction is the same in both cases: being, or third-plank unconcealing. But the other term is not the same in both cases, because the 'entities' from which the ontological difference distinguishes being is not the same as second-plank unconcealing. First, second-plank unconcealing is the appearing of what appears in comporting or intentionality, whereas 'entities' refers to *that which* appears in second-plank unconcealing. Second, the 'entities' from which being is distinguished in the ontological difference must refer to entities as such and as a whole (i.e., world), in order to guarantee that being is not an entity (SZ: 6). But what appears in second plank unconcealing is some particular entity. Distinguishing being from *this* does not guarantee that being is not an entity (i.e., the ontological difference), only that it is not that particular entity. So, the distinction between second-plank unconcealing and third-plank unconcealing is not the ontological difference. It might, however, shed light on the ontological difference.

are that and what they are. They are determinately *there* rather than not, *this* rather than that, and *an entity* rather than a non-entity. The ontic determinacy of entities comes from their having limits: '[l]imit and end are that whereby entities first begin to *be*'; 'what first makes an entity be an entity as opposed to a nonentity [...is for it] to attain its limit, to de-limit itself' (IM: 63/GA40: 46). Second-plank unconcealing unconceals limits.

Third-plank unconcealing *conceals* limits, leaving being without the sort of determinacy that entities have. Consider this passage, which I invoked in §14:

[...Being [*Seyn*],] by which entities are distinguished from non-entities [*Nichtseiende*], and owing to which they are and are such and such, does not stand in the clearing but in *hiddenness* [*Verhüllung*]. Consequently, the attempt to grasp this being [*Seyn*] as if it were an entity yields emptiness. Being [*Seyn*] is not merely hidden [*verborgen*]; it withdraws [*entzieht sich*] and conceals itself [*verbirgt sich*]. From this we derive an essential insight: the clearing, in which entities are, is not simply bounded and delimited by something hidden [*Verborgenes*] but by something *self-concealing* [*Sichverbergendes*].

(BQP: 178 / GA45: 210, Heidegger's italics)

Heidegger speaks here of entities appearing as distinguished from non-entities and as grounded in being, and he points out that we cannot grasp being in the same way—as grounded, and as distinguished from what is not. As a result, being is 'bounded and delimited by something hidden'—its inaccessible edges, or *others than*. This hidden boundary conceals itself, and this self-concealing is what produces the hiddenness of being's *other than, rather than*, and its *being* other than. That is, this is another way of saying that *lēthē* is repelling, that being has no ground and is self-grounding, and that we cannot draw the distinction between being and entities. It is this concealing of its *other than, rather than*, and its *being* other than, I suggest, that distinguishes being's appearing from that of entities and that renders it distinctively self-concealing.

It is also this self-concealing that positions being to let entities through to appearing, as light lets visible objects through to visibility

(ET: 44/GA34: 59). I said in §14 that being lets entities through by refraining from activating Dasein's absorption in entities, for if Dasein were to be absorbed in being in the way that it is in entities (*per impossibile*), then entities would not show up. To be absorbed in entities is to engage with them circumspectively, which is to interact with them in terms of how they figure in carrying out Dasein's project of being who it is. A case of Dasein takes up a project and, as we saw in §11, opens up a context of significance in terms of which entities can be meaningful, as that and what they are. Making sense of entities, as that and what they are, in comporting towards them is Dasein's falling absorption in entities, or insisting. So, for Dasein to be absorbed in entities is for it to engage with them, in their being as that and what they are. Being must thus let entities through in the sense of letting them be—in their being (ground), as they are (rather than not), and as what they are (rather than not). And, so as not to impede this letting through, being must not itself appear in the same way—with a ground and other *others than*. By appearing without these, being succeeds as a medium that allows entities to show up in their ontic determinacy as meaningfully related to Dasein's projects.

That being's appearing involves a lack of its various *others than* explains why, as we saw in the previous section, interpreters would reach for the metaphor of the whole that one cannot get out of in order to understand being's self-concealing. Being unable to access the whole means precisely being unable to grasp it as *other than*. We can also see why being's appearing would be described as a diffuse luminosity, or as pervasive and familiar, like an atmosphere, or as like a background rather than a foreground. What makes it like these is not that it is too near, seen first, at work, taken for granted, or a condition of possibility. What makes being like a background or like light or air is that it lacks any clear contrast case. It lacks ontic determinacy, in the same way that the background lacks the crispness of the foreground, light lacks the visibility of visible objects, the pervasive lacks the distinctiveness of the clear or the unfamiliar. Thus being 'is constantly manifest in everything and anything in such a way that it is precisely overlooked' in the sense

that ‘there is no way out [...] to explain the most unusual and thereby make it again the usual’ (BQP: 150/GA45: 174)—that is, like entities in having determinate contrasts. Being’s shining out is thus only metaphorically an ‘inconspicuous shining [*unscheinbare[s] Scheinen*]’ (H: 109/GA55: 144). It is rather an unconstrained, upsurge appearing—an unbounded bounding forth.

It is because it is unbounded in this way that being can be forgotten, not only in Dasein’s absorption in entities but in the history of metaphysics. Lacking any contrast cases, being is indefinable (SZ: 4). It cannot be defined in the ways that entities are defined—namely, by being collected under a genus and distinguished by specific difference. It thus appears as a simple, universal concept (SZ: 3), at work in all our recognition of entities as entities, and so as self-evident (SZ: 4) and undifferentiated. Metaphysics comes to forget that being involves any difference at all. It forgets that there are different ways of being—that, for example, Dasein’s existing differs from the being involved of the ready-to-hand, and that both differ from the being present-at-hand of the substance or merely present entity. For reasons that Heidegger (not always plausibly) details, this latter way of being comes to dominate in the history of Western metaphysics and to occlude the very possibility of other ways of being. All entities, including we ourselves, show up as mere objects, simply there—or, at most, as there to be exploited. ‘Entities then appear *in that way*, namely as objects and as things objectively present, as if being were not occurring essentially [*weste*]’ (C: 91/GA65: 115).

Of course, the reason for this flattening of ways of being is precisely that being’s essential occurring involves self-concealing. As Heraclitus put it, *phusis kruptesthai philei*. We can now return to Heidegger’s interpretation of this fragment, which I discussed in §3, and make sense of what Heidegger says of it. To say that *phusis kruptesthai philei*, that being loves to conceal itself, is to say that being is essentially self-concealing. As I have interpreted it, this says that it is essential to the happening of being that it be ultimately concealed by virtue of the inaccessibility of its various *others than*, including its ground and *lēthē*. That being’s self-concealing is a consequence of the inaccessibility of *lēthē* to disclosing begins to

explain why Heidegger would so closely associate the two—to the point of (as I accused him) collapsing one into the other or sliding between the two. For example, I flagged the following two passages: (i) ‘if prevailing [*Walten*] is torn from concealment [*Verborgenheit*] in the *logos*, then it must, as it were, try to conceal itself [*sich zu verbergen*]’ (FCM: 27/GA29/30: 41); (ii) ‘[o]nly what in its very essence unconceals and must unconceal itself can love to conceal [*verbergen*] itself. Only what is unconcealing can be concealing [*Verbergung*]’ (OECF: 230/GA9: 301). Both passages claim that unconcealing is self-concealing *because* it overcomes a prior concealment, *lēthē*. As I said, this claim is, on its own, indefensible. There is no obvious reason that overcoming a prior concealment should render unconcealing self-concealing. But now I can supply a possible reason: when unconcealing overcomes *lēthē*, *lēthē* is positioned outside the scope of unconcealing. This leaves unconcealing’s *rather than* outside of its grasp, which conceals unconcealing from itself in the way that I have outlined. My interpretation thus supplies the reason that Heidegger’s text is lacking (although, of course, it does not absolve him of responsibility for that lack).

We can now also better understand the sense in which *lēthē* might be said to be self-concealing. For example: ‘It is inherent in it [i.e. oblivion [*Vergessenheit*]] to withdraw itself [*sich entziehen*] and to founder in the wake of its own concealment [*Verbergen*]. The Greeks experienced oblivion [*Vergessenheit*], *lēthē*, as a destining of concealment [*Verbergung*]’ (EGT: 108/GA7: 272). I said earlier (§3) that there is no need for *lēthē*, as a prior concealment, to withdraw and conceal itself. While this remains true, the passage can also be interpreted as pointing out the way in which *lēthē* repels disclosing. That is, it makes the same point that Heidegger made in ‘What is Metaphysics?’ when he said that the nothing is nihilating (WM: 90/GA9: 114). It is a darkness that resists all light. While I would not myself describe this as a further concealing, it is plausibly, as Heidegger says, a type of withdrawal.

That *lēthē* resists disclosing, and so is in this (and only this) sense self-concealing, might also explain Heidegger’s tendency to position *kruptesthai* at the ground of *alētheia*, and so at the start of a process

of unconcealing.⁹ That is, it would make sense to say that *alētheia* arises out of *kruptesthai* if ‘*kruptesthai*’ referred to a feature of *lēthē*, namely that it resists disclosure. (It would not make *good* sense, but it would make some sense). Alternatively, and preferably, we could hear Heidegger not as positioning *kruptesthai* where *lēthē* lies, as the presupposition of third-plank unconcealing, but instead as speaking of the concealing of an entirely different sort of ground—namely, of the impetus that sets off the process of *alētheuein*. As we have seen, this ground is the mysterious self-grounding of being and disclosing, which is a third-plank form of *kruptesthai*. Being wells up out of itself and disclosing uncannily brings itself about, and how either happens is fundamentally mysterious. Their mysteriousness is a product of disclosing’s trying to make sense of them and so is a form of self-concealing: ‘self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*] is what *phusis* bestows from itself as that wherein it itself remains grounded’ (H: 108/GA55: 141). So, in a sense, self-concealing does lie at the ground of third-plank unconcealing. It remains, however, distinct from *lēthē*.

Third-plank *kruptesthai* is, however, very closely related to a third-plank phenomenon of earth. Recall that earth, at the second plank, is the manifestly hidden materiality of the material out of which the work of art is made. At the third plank, earth must be (i) a ground of worlding, being, disclosing, that (ii) is produced or established by that worlding, being, or disclosing, and that (iii) nonetheless shows up as resisting all unconcealing. I have argued in §12 that third-plank *lēthē* does not meet these criteria: it is ‘simply the closed’ (OWA: 31/GA5: 42) rather than that which ‘rises up as self-closing [*Sichverschließend*]]’ (OWA: 31/GA5: 42); it precedes

⁹ E.g., ‘emerging [...] can emerge as emerging only from out of self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*]: it draws itself back into this’ (H: 116/GA55: 153, cf. H: 107/GA55: 141); ‘[r]ising (out of self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*]) bestows favor upon self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*]’ (EGT: 114/GA7: 279); “the never going into concealment [*Verbergung*]”, never falls prey to concealment [*Verbergung*] only to be dissolved in it, but remains committed to self-concealing [*Sichverbergen*], because as the never-going-into...it is always a rising-out-of-concealment [*Verbergung*]’ (EGT: 114/GA7: 279); ‘[t]he establishing of emerging back into a prior self-occluding [*Sichverschließen*]; the overcoming of emerging by self-occluding [*Sichverschließen*]...’ (H: 101/GA55: 133).

and is not produced by third-plank unconcealing; and it is not a ground of that unconcealing but only that which is presupposed by its privative character. But being's concealed *others than* do meet these criteria. I will argue that earth, at the third-plank, is the manifestly hidden *rather than* (i.e., *lēthē*), *other than* (i.e., ground), and *being other than* (entities) of third-plank unconcealing. It is the concealment that is generated when third-plank unconcealing tries to grasp itself in its alterity, and so the concealment that results from being's self-concealing, which we can thus also call 'earthing'.

Being's concealed ground meets the first criterion—of being a ground—in a rather straightforward sense (excepting that, insofar as it is a mysterious ground, it does not). Being's mysterious self-grounding is something like a moving cause for its obtaining. The work of art is grounded in earth in a different sense: earth is a material ground, since *qua* materiality it belongs to the material *out of which* the work of art is made. The material cause for being, as the process of third-plank unconcealing, will be an *out of which* of a different sort. Since being is a process of unconcealing, its *out of which* and so material ground is the steps in the process of its happening—including the step-zero, as it were, of the process, *lēthē*, which being as unconcealing overcomes and so is *rather than*.¹⁰ As *rather than* being, *lēthē* belongs to the material ground of being, but it also plausibly belongs to being's formal cause, or essence, as that which it is defined in contrast to. Being's formal cause, or essence, will also include its (obscure) distinction from entities. A passage that I quoted in §23 claims that being's difference from entities *is* in fact its essence (A: 275/GA5: 364) but the weaker claim is sufficient here. All of being's contrast cases are grounds in one sense or another, as earth is of world. This is, of course, the reason that being needs to be grasped in contrast to its contrast cases in order to be ultimately disclosed.

It is, further, only in disclosing's attempt to so grasp being that these contrast cases first *become* contrast cases and first come to

¹⁰ In laying out his four causes or four types of grounds, Aristotle is quite clear that the material cause, or that *from out of which* something is composed, need not be matter. For example, letters are the material cause of a syllable, parts are that of a whole, assumptions or premises are the material of a conclusion (Aristotle, *Physics*, 195a15–17).

count as grounds. As I claimed in §15, there are grounds only for the attempt to ground, and so too there are contrast cases only for the attempt to contrast. Disclosing approaches being in the same way that it approaches entities, attempting to contrast it with its various *others than*. But while worlding or disclosing ‘strives to surmount’ earth because it is driven to unconcealing and so ‘will tolerate nothing closed [*Verschlossenes*]’ (OWA: 26/GA5: 35), nonetheless its efforts fail. Being cannot be rendered determinate in the same way as entities. Disclosing does not make being manifest in its *rather than lēthē*, *other than* its ground, or *being other than* entities. Its being other than entities, the ontological difference, is thoroughly opaque. Being shows up as having no ground and as self-grounding in a mysterious way. And because *lēthē* is essentially repelling, it cannot be grasped as a contrast case. All these ‘edges’ of being ‘shatter[] every attempt to penetrate’ them (OWA: 25/GA5: 33) and being thus shatters every attempt to delimit or bound it. Disclosing’s attempt to grasp it only brings being to light as self-concealing. The repelling or self-concealing boundaries that delimit third-plank unconcealing (BQP: 178/GA45: 210) are ‘[brought] into the open as the self-secluding’ (OWA: 25/GA5: 33). These self-secluding boundaries meet the second and third criteria for third-plank earth: they are produced by disclosing and show up as resisting it.¹¹

Thus when Heidegger translates his talk of world and earth into talk of truth and un-truth, and so brings it to the level of third-plank unconcealing, he makes the point that ‘[c]oncealment [*Verbergung*] as refusal [*Versagen*] is not primarily or only the limit of knowledge in each particular case; it is, rather, the beginning of the clearing of what is illuminated’ (OWA: 30/GA5: 40). The beginning of the clearing is the ‘edge’ of third-plank unconcealing. The claim is that ‘concealment as refusal’ applies here, and not just to

¹¹ One might now return to the work of art and wonder to what extent concealed alterity is relevant to the earth that belongs to it. I note only that the temple is described as making alterity visible: ‘Standing there, the building holds its place against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm visible in its violence. The gleam and luster of the stone, though apparently there only by the grace of the sun, in fact first brings forth the light of day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of night. The temple’s firm towering makes visible the invisible space of the air’ (OWA: 21/GA5: 28).

entities that may refuse their what-being to us in any particular case. In fact, ‘refusal [*Versagen*[]] and obstructing [*Verstellen*[]]’ (OWA: 31/GA5: 41) characterise the beginning or ‘continuing origin’ (OWA: 31/GA5: 41) of the clearing in precisely the senses that I have outlined: what is at this origin or ground, or beyond being as any of its contrast cases, resists all disclosure. It is in this sense that ‘[t]ruth, in its essence, is un-truth’ (OWA: 31/GA5: 41).

Such untruth is quite unlike that in ‘On the Essence of Truth’, which I discussed in §13 and which turned out to be the backgrounding of world. The untruth invoked here is the ‘backgrounding’ of being. It is also, oddly, unlike the second-plank phenomenon of earth that I identified in §4. There, earth was the product of a phenomenon of *krupstein*: when the work of art is uncovered as the entity that it is, something other than that uncovering is concealed—namely, the material dimension of the work of art. This other-concealing (*krupstein*) is second-plank earthing. At the third plank, however, earthing is the concealing of third-plank unconcealing. Being shows up but is concealed in its *others than*. Because it is being, *qua* third-plank unconcealing, that is (ultimately, but not wholly) concealed, this is a form of *kruptesthai*. Such earthing is the same as the self-concealing of being. The concealment produced by it is earth. I add both to the taxonomy accordingly. See Tables 24.1, 24.2, and 24.3.

Table 24.1 Concealment (*lēthē*), unconcealing (*alētheuein*), and unconcealment (*alētheia*) at the third plank

Plank	Concealment (<i>lēthē</i>)	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Unconcealment (<i>alētheia</i>)
Three	No understanding of being is operative, the nothing	Being— <i>Ereignis</i> —disclosing—worlding	Manifestness of entities as such and as a whole (disclosedness)

Table 24.2 Phenomena of self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) and phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē*₂), essential (E) and contingent (C), at the third plank

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē</i> ₂)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein</i> ₂)
Three	Being— <i>Ereignis</i> — disclosing—worlding	Being conceals its being <i>other than</i> entities, its ground, and <i>lēthē</i> (= earthing) (E) Disclosing conceals the whence and whither of its thrownness (E) Dasein in-sists, discovers entities (E) Disclosing conceals the whence (and whither) of its thrownness (E) Inauthentic disclosing/falling turns away from that concealing and towards entities (C)	Earth (E): Being's being <i>other than</i> entities, its ground, and <i>lēthē</i> are concealed (E) The whence and whither of thrownness are concealed (E) The concealed whence (and whither) of thrownness is concealed: fallenness, absorption (C)	– Authentic disclosing reveals the whence of thrownness as concealed (C)

Table 24.3 Phenomena of other-concealing (*kruptein*) and phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē₂*), essential (E) and contingent (C), at the third plank

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Other-concealing (<i>kruptein</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē₂</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein₂</i>)
Three	Being— <i>Ereignis</i> —disclosing—worlding	<p>The worlding of the world backgrounds it (untruth) (E)</p> <p>The worlding of this world conceals other possible worlds (E)</p>	<p>The world is backgrounded (E)</p> <p>Other possible worlds are concealed (E)</p>	<p>The backgrounding of the world is concealed (the mystery) (E) and the mystery is forgotten = falling = erring (the counter-essence of truth) (C) = Dasein's ontological self-distancing (E)</p>	Philosophising openness to the mystery (C)

Conclusion

25. The Possibility of Thinking Being

I have tried to illuminate being with its proper brightness—one that makes its ‘dark pure and clear.’¹ I have argued that to say that being is self-concealing is to say that being appears or takes place in a way that is unlike how entities presence, and that this difference consists in the fact that entities come to presence determinately with grounds, that-beings, and what-beings, whereas being’s appearing happens indeterminately with no clear ground, *rather than*, or *being other than*. Being is other than entities—yet not in a way that we can grasp. It is rather than *lēthē*—and yet we cannot access *lēthē*. And it has a ground—in itself, which is no ground at all. These concealings all belong to the self-concealing of being, which is the fact that being cannot be grasped in light of any *others than*. I identified this phenomenon of concealing by considering a self-concealing that is not only correlated but closely entwined with being’s self-concealing, namely the self-concealing of disclosing, which Heidegger introduces in *Being and Time* as the concealing of the whence and whither of thrownness.

My method overall has been to sort various phenomena of concealing and concealment according to the distinctions that I drew in §2 between *lēthē*, *kruptesthai*, and *kruptein*, on the one hand, and the distinctions that Wrathall drew between various ‘planks’ of unconcealment, on the other. The taxonomy is now nearly complete. There may be more phenomena to be included at the first and second planks, but these will not be of great significance.

¹ Heidegger, ‘Principles of Thinking’, in *The Poetry of Thinking*, 56.

Of more significance is the remaining empty cell at the third plank, which I mentioned in §21. That cell holds the possibility of an *alētheuein*₂—an unconcealing that would overcome the concealment (earth) produced by third-plank *kruptesthai*. This unconcealing would be analogous to the six other phenomena of *alētheuein*₂ that overcome the concealments produced by phenomena of concealing: poetising, which makes manifest that and how speaking works; the poetising or authentic speaking that brings us into genuine relationship with entities previously covered up in talking idly; authentic discovering, which also brings us into genuine relationship with entities, but in comporting rather than in speaking; the phenomenological seeing that reveals the unconcealing character of comporting; the authentic disclosing that arrests our fleeing immersion in entities and orients us towards our own uncanny being; and the philosophising openness to the mystery, in which we are open to the concealed backgrounding of the world. Each of these authentic or phenomenological forms of unconcealing uncovers something that was previously concealed. Does the same happen with respect to the self-concealing of being? Is a thinking of being that overcomes the self-concealing of being possible or will that self-concealing always be an impediment? My answer to the first question is (provisionally) ‘no’, the self-concealing of being cannot be overcome. But, in answer to the second question, I do not think that this is an impediment to the study of being.

Overcoming the self-concealing of being in an *alētheuein*₂ would amount to grasping being as delimited by its various *others than*. It is hard to see how this would be possible, given that *lēthē* is essentially repelling and if Heidegger is right that being’s self-grounding and its differing from entities are hopelessly obscure. This ‘if’ warrants further investigation. In the interim, it is clear at least that Heidegger thinks that ‘the *kruptesthai* of *phusis* is not to be overcome, not to be stripped from *phusis*’ (OECP: 230/GA9: 301), since *phusis* ‘not only never dispenses with concealing [*Verbergen*], but actually needs it, in order to occur essentially in the way it occurs [*Wesen, west*] as dis-closing’ (EGT: 114/GA7: 279). To overcome being’s self-concealing would be to deprive it of its essential

hiddenness, which it loves and so that makes it what it is. Removing being's distinctive indeterminacy would destroy it. It would treat being as if it were an entity. Thus there is no activity of phenomenological seeing or ontological investigating that can come to clearly see being in its *rather than lēthē*, *other than* its ground, and *being other than* entities. We cannot ultimately grasp being.

But this limitation does not impede a thoughtful engagement with being. For, as I have argued, being is only *ultimately* but not *wholly* concealed. There is much to be said about being's shining out and its various modes, as well as about disclosing and how it is correlated with being as a dimension of third-plank unconcealing (i.e., *das Ereignis*). Indeed, there is much to be said about worlding, which is a way of thinking third-plank unconcealing that receives comparatively little attention in Heidegger's corpus. There is presumably also more to be said about being's self-concealing—not only about the fact *that* being conceals itself but also about how we experience and express that self-concealing.

There is also, much more remotely, the possibility of a completely new type of thinking for which being is not and never was self-concealing. Being is not self-concealing if we do not try to grasp it in distinction from and in relation to something else. Such a thinking would not proceed to identify and define by *sunthesis* and *diairesis*, or by any other method of delimitation. It would not ask the 'why' question, which quests for grounds—and so it would not belong to the lineage that, according to Aristotle, began with the ancient Greek quest for the *archē*.² This new type of thinking would not ask why there are entities at all rather than nothing, and so the thinker thinking it would be neither anxious nor amazed. As such, they would not transcend beyond (*meta*-) entities (*ta phusika*) to being, and so they would also be neither metaphysical nor ontico-ontological. Not oscillating within the ontological difference, this thinker would not be Dasein. Dasein makes sense of everything it encounters—including itself—by grasping that and what it is in its

² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.3.

being. A sense-maker who does not do this is not a case of Dasein. It is not even clear that they remain a sense-maker.

Such a thinker and their thinking are scarcely conceivable. The degree to which they exceed our imagination matches the necessity, for both being and Dasein, of being self-concealing.

APPENDIX

The Taxonomy of Phenomena of Concealing and Concealment in Heidegger's Work

Table A.1 Phenomena of concealment (*lēthē*), unconcealing (*alētheuein*), and unconcealment (*alētheia*) at all four planks

Plank	Concealment (<i>lēthē</i>)	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Unconcealment (<i>alētheia</i>)
One	An entity does not show up to the interlocutor as x	An entity shows up, through speaking, to the interlocutor as x	Manifestness of the entity as x in speaking (linguistic communication)
Two	An entity is not available in comportment	An entity shows up meaningfully as x in comporting towards it (discovering)	Manifestness of the entity as x in comporting (discoveredness)
Three	No understanding of being is operative, the nothing	Being— <i>Ereignis</i> —disclosing—worlding	Manifestness of entities as such and as a whole (disclosedness)
Four	n/a	n/a	The clearing

Table A.2 Phenomena of self-concealing (*kruptesthai*) and phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē*₂), essential (E) and contingent (C), at all four planks

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē</i> ₂)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein</i> ₂)
One	An entity shows up, through speaking, to the interlocutor as x	The speaking conceals that it reveals the entity as x (E)	Speaking's revealing of the entity as x is concealed (E)	Phenomenologising or poetising reveals that speaking reveals the entity (as x) (C)
Two	An entity shows up meaningfully as x in comporting towards it	The comporting conceals that it uncovers the entity as x (E)	Comporting's uncovering of the entity as x is concealed (E)	Phenomenologising reveals that comporting uncovers the entity (as x) (C)
Three	Being— <i>Ereignis</i> —disclosing—worlding	<p>Being conceals its being <i>other than</i> entities, its ground, and <i>lēthē</i> (= earthing) (E)</p> <p>Disclosing conceals the whence and whither of its thrownness (E)</p> <p>Dasein in-sists, discovers entities (E)</p> <p>Disclosing conceals the whence (and whither) of its thrownness (E)</p> <p>Inauthentic disclosing/falling turns away from that concealing and towards entities (C)</p>	<p>Earth (E):</p> <p>Being's being <i>other than</i> entities, its ground, and <i>lēthē</i> are concealed (E)</p> <p>The whence and whither of thrownness are concealed (E)</p> <p>The concealed whence (and whither) of thrownness are concealed: fallenness, absorption (C)</p>	<p>–</p> <p>Authentic disclosing reveals the whence (and whither) of thrownness as concealed (C)</p>
Four	n/a	–	–	–

Table A.3 Phenomena of other-concealing (*kruptein*), and some phenomena of concealment₂ (*lēthē₂*), essential (E) and contingent (C), at all four planks

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Other-concealing (<i>kruptein</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē₂</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein₂</i>)
One	An entity shows up, through speaking, to the interlocutor as x	The speaking conceals the entity as y (E)	The entity is concealed as y (E)	n/a	–
		The speaking conceals the words, sounds, and symbols it uses, while meaning shows up (E)	The words, sounds, and symbols that the speaking uses are concealed (E)	n/a	Poetry unconceals the words, sounds, and symbols that the speaking uses (C)
		Speaking falsely conceals (some aspect of) the entity (C)	The entity is concealed in speaking falsely (C)	Speaking falsely conceals its concealing of the entity (E)	–
		n/a	n/a	Idly talking conceals its not-unconcealing of the entity (ambiguity) (E)	Authentic speaking or poetising reveals the entity (C)

Continued

Table A.3 *Continued*

Plank	Unconcealing (<i>alētheuein</i>)	Other-concealing (<i>kruptein</i>)	Concealment ₂ (possible <i>lēthē₂</i>)	Self-concealing (<i>kruptesthai</i>)	Unconcealing ₂ (<i>alētheuein₂</i>)
Two	An entity shows up meaningfully as x in comporting towards it	Discovering an entity as x conceals it as y (E)	The entity is concealed as y, etc. (withheld abundance of intelligibility) (E)	–	–
		Discovering an entity as x backgrounds the world (E)	The world is backgrounded (E)	–	The world is revealed in anthropology, etc., or in phenomenology
		Discovering entities such as works of art, secrets, mysteries, signs, tools, and skills conceals (some aspect of) that entity or something else (E)	In entities such as works of art, secrets, mysteries, signs, tools, and skills, something is concealed (E)	–	–
		Discovering in the mode of seeming conceals (some aspect of) the entity (C)	The entity is concealed in seeming, semblance (C)	Discovering in the mode of seeming conceals its concealing of the entity (E)	Authentic discovering reveals the entity (C)
		Inauthentically discovering conceals (some aspect of) the entity (C)	The entity is concealed in inauthentic discovering (C)	Inauthentic discovering conceals its concealing of the entity (ambiguity) (E)	Authentic discovering reveals the entity (C)

Three	Being— <i>Ereignis</i> — disclosing— worlding	The worlding of the world backgrounds it (untruth) (E) The worlding of this world conceals other possible worlds (E)	The world is backgrounded (E) Other possible worlds are concealed (E)	The backgrounding of the world is concealed (the mystery) (E) and the mystery is forgotten = falling = erring (the counter- essence of truth) (C) = Dasein's ontological self-distancing (E)	Philosophising openness to the mystery (C)
Four	n/a	–	–	–	–

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